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C. K. OGDEN

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA,

SHADOWING FORTH

THE FULNESS OF CHRISTIAN BLESSING IN CHRIST.

BY

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"THE GOSPEL OF OUR SALVATION," "THE CHILD OF GOD," ETC.

"All these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."—I COR. x. II.

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NOTE.

SOME twenty years ago the writer of this volume published "The Gospel in the Book of Joshua," which book went through some editions, and is now out of print. It was not possible to amend and enlarge the original volume, hence, with the exception of a few sentences, the whole has been re-written, and is now laid before the reader under the title of "The Book of Joshua, shadowing forth the Fulness of Christian Blessing in Christ."

The note to the first volume may be here reproduced. "The attentive reader of God's Word has, doubtless, observed an analogy between the Book of Joshua and the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians. The object of this little volume is to direct the mind to this analogy, and to lead the reader to search more deeply into the truths which are illustrated by the Book of Joshua."

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples" (types—*margin*): "and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Cor. x. 11.)

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE Book of Joshua consists of two sections. The first (chap. i.-xii.) records the conquest of the land; the second (chap. xiii.-xxiv.) records the distribution of the land by lot among the tribes.

The first section may be divided broadly into two parts: the one beginning with the entrance into Canaan, and ending with the victory of Israel at the fall of Jericho (chap. i.-vi.); the other, beginning with the sin of Israel and their defeat at Ai, and ending with the enumeration of the conquered kings (chap. vii. to xii.).

From the time of the entrance into Canaan to the fall of the city of Jericho, which is emphatically a type of the overthrow of the organized evil of this world, all went on in the power of God with Israel; the course of the divine purpose was carried out uninterruptedly by the nation, and closing the book of Joshua at the overthrow of that city, there stands before us a brilliant type of God's ways in bringing in His coming kingdom.

From the fall of Jericho to the enumeration of the vanquished kings (end of chap. xii.) there are seen the ways of God, and also the failure of His people.

In the latter part of the first section of the book (chap. viii. 30-35) the noble scene of the assembly of all Israel at Ebal and Gerizim occurs, where the nation established in the power of Jehovah's word, as His people in the promised land, formally places itself under obedience to that word. In a somewhat similar way to the victory of Jericho changing to the defeat at Ai, so in this scene Israel falls from strength to weakness. Instead of obedience to the word of God, they listened

to flatterers (chap. ix.) and entered into alliance with enemies, the sure prelude to ruin.

The remainder of the first section of the book is taken up with the combination of the powers of Canaan and the conquest of Israel, concluding with the numbering up of victories.

The second section (chap. xiii.-xxiv.) begins with the warning words of the Lord, "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." The general weakness and inertness of the people are described, though brilliant exceptions to the prevailing spirit are noted. The land rests from war, and the worship of Jehovah in Shiloh and His laws of righteousness in the Cities of Refuge are established. Thus circumstances promise well for Israel, upon whom lies the responsibility to gain what they had not yet subdued, as well as to maintain that which they had gained, and with what results their subsequent history declares!

The book closes with Joshua's charge, and his exhortation to the people not to ally themselves with the heathen; with Jehovah's word to them recalling His ways of mercy, followed by Joshua's appeal to them to forsake their idols; its last words recount Joshua's death, and refer to what resulted from Joseph's faith.

The first part of the book of Joshua, as a whole, is vigorous with divine energy. It is, generally speaking, strength in the Lord and in the power of His might. The second, as a whole, is inaction, and inaction in the face of the enemy is failure.

Inaction, following upon zeal, expresses in a few words the history of every era, in which responsibility to maintain a divine position has been entrusted to God's people. And may it not be added, inaction following upon zeal, expresses briefly the story of the various religious movements which have occurred amongst Christians—those revivals to truth and to Christ,

wrought by the Spirit of God, which have so frequently occurred since Pentecost?

These movements begin with faith in God, and faith's consequences—spiritual energy, zeal, self-denial, and the spirit of victory. Then, as time passes on, the middle age of the movement develops subsidence into acquired privileges, spiritual sloth, and dependence upon leaders rather than on God. After the middle age, arrives the end of what was once a movement for God; adhesion to the traditions of elders, instead of obedience to His word; holding on to some special creed, instead of to God Himself. The spirit of the soldier contending for God's truth on the earth is lost; direct dealing with God departs from the soul, worldliness ensues; and, as Israel mingled with the nations around them, so does the rearward of what was once a divine movement, become a camp-following which soon is absorbed in the world. In the latter stages of such a history, a state of indifference and a spirit of self-confidence prevail. God not being depended on, the Scripture not being the only rule, the leadings of God's Spirit are neglected, and human complacency abounds. The memories of the past are substituted for the living energy of the present; the feather-bed of religious custom for the hardships of spiritual welfare. Laxity and pretension are near neighbours in the soul. Luke-warmness to the things God loves in His people, and the assertion, "We have need of nothing" (Rev. iii. 16, 17), are the two-fold signs of a degenerate spirit.

Recovery from this low state is obtained through the discipline of God's hand, often severe, always solemn. How the anguish of Israel, recorded in the Book of Judges, evidences this truth! And it should not be forgotten that that anguish was but the reaping of the fruits sown, as recorded in the latter part of the Book of Joshua. God will not permit the inflation, the boast, the unreal state that pride begets, to continue amongst His people. His severe hand of government, inflicting suffering, leads, through His grace, to self-judgment in

His people; to humiliation, and its invariable accompaniment, prayer. And then it is, sins and shame being honestly mourned over and confessed, and the sins truly forsaken, God once more becomes the present help of His own, revives their hearts, recovers their strength, and renews their victories. For God is God, and He changes not.

The healthful instructions of the Book of Joshua, its vigorous action, and its solemn warnings, are particularly suited to our own times. On the one hand, there are numbers of Christians just learning from God what Christianity really is. These are coming to the front rank as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. They are, practically speaking, in the spirit of the early chapters of the book. If the contemplation of the figures and examples of the Book of Joshua, as opened in our pages, shall stimulate the zeal, heighten the courage, or aid the spirit of such believers, to God be the praise. On the other hand, there are Christians, who have learned much of what Christianity is, but who are lying asleep among the dead, as St. Paul warned the Ephesians in his epistle. These Christians, practically speaking, are in the laxity of the latter half of the Book of Joshua. The girdle of truth is slack about their loins, the shield of faith covers not their whole man, the sword of the Spirit, if held, is uplifted by nerveless arms: their lives are lives of spiritual inaction, their existence for God on this earth a prolonged failure. To such, the warnings of the latter part of the Book of Joshua have a peculiar significance; they seem to cry aloud, "Repent! do the first works;" "Awake, thou that sleepest, and rise up from among the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee."

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CHAPTER I.

The Leader.

“Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, saying, Moses My servant is dead.”—JOSH. i. 1.

WITH Jehovah’s words to Joshua, “Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise,” the book that is before us commences.

Moses, “the drawn out”—Jehovah’s servant appointed to bring forth His people out of Egypt—had passed off the scene. Jehovah had buried him, and hidden the place of his sepulchre. (Deut. xxxiv. 6.) Joshua, originally called Oshea (salvation), afterwards Jehoshua or Joshua (the Lord is salvation), had taken his place.

Moses, bringing Israel out of the land of Egypt, typifies the Lord Jesus bringing His people out of this world which lies under judgment; Moses, the mediator, and Aaron, the high priest, typify Him leading His people through this wilderness world. Joshua, bringing Israel into Canaan, typifies Christ risen from the dead, leading His people in spirit into the land of glory, and in conflict with the enemy in the heavenly places.

A new era commenced in Israel's history at the death of Moses; and as Jehovah had a leader ready to bring in and establish His people in their land of promise, Israel's path of blessing lay in following their divinely-appointed captain. Through him they would learn what was for them "The Lord is salvation."

The Law-giver had brought them to the end of the wilderness, to the verge of their promised possession; but, in the purposes of God, no more than this could the Law-giver do. We are not now considering the haste of his lips, and the striking of the rock in disobedience to Jehovah's word—meekest of men as Moses was, he failed to preserve in himself the character of our meek and lowly Lord, of Whom in so many ways he is a type: there is none perfect, save the Lord Jesus, of whom Moses, the man of God, did write—we are regarding Moses in his official character as the law-giver. It was impossible, because of what the ways of God with men are, and because of what the law in itself is, that the law's representative should bring God's people into the land of promise.

There is a moral fitness in this fact not to be overlooked. Our meditation on the book of Joshua must begin where God commences its instruction—"after the death of Moses." It is not consonant with God's ways that the law given by Moses should bring a single soul into spiritual blessings in association with Christ where He now is in heaven. Such of God's people as are under the law in spirit (for, as we read in the Epistle to the Galatians, under it, in God's purposes, no Christian is) do not know their path of

blessing in following our Joshua, even Christ risen from among the dead; they miss in their souls what "The Lord is salvation" really means.

The "weakness and unprofitableness" (Heb. vii. 18) of the principles of the law are apparent when the power of God in grace is before us. The law says in effect, "This do, and thou shalt live" (Luke x. 28)—it requires human obedience as a condition to obtaining life; but the gospel of God brings in life through divine righteousness already magnified by what has been done by Christ, who died for us. The law appeals to man, as man in relationship with God truly, but none the less to man, as responsible in himself to do good. Grace, on the other hand, flows from God in His mercy to man as he is in his badness (Rom. v. 8). The law commands man to do that which, while in his helpless state, he never can do. The grace of God bestows on man, when helpless, a new life in Christ Jesus. The law commands man to reach up to blessing; grace brings blessing to man where he is. Hence the force of these words, "Moses My servant is dead" (indicating how spiritual blessings are all of grace), must be kept before the heart if we would arise and follow our Leader—Jesus, the Lord risen from the dead, and thus lay hold of Canaan blessings. All that man is in himself and of his own strength must be out of sight when the heavenly places are in view. Christ is in heaven, and Christ risen from the dead is indeed for us, "The Lord is salvation."

Let us enquire at this point, where, as a matter of faith, are we? Where does our faith apprehend we stand as viewed by God? No man can have faith for

another; therefore, the question is a searching one. Scripture says, "Made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 6.) We should seek for grace to see ourselves, by faith, as and where God actually sees us in Christ. God does not see His people in the flesh (Rom. viii. 9), nor as under the law (Rom. vi. 14), but in Christ.

Nothing so braces up the spirit as faith in God's facts. How am I to get the blessing? is a question often raised by God's dear people. The reply is, Get into God's truth about the blessing. When, through grace, a man believes God's word respecting the death of Christ for sinners, he is secure from the judgment of this world, he is delivered from the wrath to come. He is secure in Christ risen from the dead, from the hand of the enemy—Satan. Further, he is seated in Christ in the heavenly places, and is graced by God the Father in the beauty of the Beloved One. We speak of the truths themselves, not of the realization of them. We realize what we believe. Realization is not a stepping-stone to faith. Faith is the foundation of realization.

Experimental acquaintance with the truth is not the truth itself, thank God! and the truth of God, not our realization of it, is our confidence. Therefore, as our souls, by the Holy Spirit's power, enter into the truths of God respecting our blessing, we begin experimentally to enter into the blessing we seek. Attainment follows faith in God. We attain by faith, not to faith.

The people of Israel, when the word "Arise" came to their Leader, were far away from Egypt and on the very borders of Canaan. They had trodden the

waste howling wilderness many a long and weary year. They had learned experimentally many a severe lesson of their own folly and evil, as well as many a blessed lesson of the unchangeableness of their God, and of His mercy which endureth for ever. Now they were about to learn God in a new way and in new scenes. The same God, but learned by them in a new way, and, therefore, according to a new, or freshly revealed, relationship. They were about to learn God as He who had carried out His word of favour to the fathers, and had brought His people Israel into the privileges and responsibilities of those favours.

They had been like a flock led through the wilderness (Psa. lxxvii. 20); they were about to be Jehovah's soldiers led to fight His battles. The soldier character—its obedience, energy, endurance, was now about to be sought for in Israel. When in the land of promise and blessing—to them what the heavenly places are to the Christian—a battle-field; their obedience, energy, and endurance would be proved.

Now the Christian is not only led by the tender hand of his God through the wilderness of this world, he is also called, as were the sons of Israel, to conflict. Meditating upon the book before us, we see how apt its instructions are for our times, and we learn, in measure, how far the thought of our being soldiers, under the leadership of our risen Lord, has truly entered our souls.

CHAPTER II.

The Exhortation to Arise and Possess.

"Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

"Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

"From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

"Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them.

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses My servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."—JOSH. i. 2-9.

God had given Israel a leader to bring them into their promised possession, and, as a preliminary to their conflict, He taught Israel definite principles to insure success, which are stated in the exhortation opening the book.

From the study of divine exhortations to the Christian

we learn that we are to live, or walk, in the power of what we have. God does not bid sinners, dead in sins, to walk in His ways; but, having given us life in Christ when we were dead in sins, He bids us walk as Christ walked. God does not require the sinner in his spiritual paralysis to do one single work of righteousness; having given us, when in that condition, strength through Christ, He exhorts thus, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) God enables His people to do, and He gives the desire to perform.

The exhortation, opening the book of Joshua, is based upon the fact that the land belonged to Israel by divine promise. On that ground God commanded them to "Arise and possess it." The beauties of the plain of Jericho, noted for its countless flowers, the wealth of Canaan's corn-fields, olives, vineyards, and mountains out of which they should "dig brass," spread themselves before the eyes of Israel. The brooks of water, and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, were before them. One thing only was requisite to the enjoyment of their portion—they must "Arise" and possess. Arise, believer, and enter into the blessings wherewith God has blessed us in Christ. All things are yours; arise, enter in.

The land across the river, which spread itself before the eyes of Israel, was the evidence of the faithfulness of God respecting His promises. The sight stirred the soul of the people. Before them was their home, with its wealth and delights, the gift of their God who had brought them out of Egypt.

What shall the Christian say who obtains a sight, ever so feeble, of his spiritual blessings? He sits down and ponders over the words, "Blessed...with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3), and as he meditates upon them, and owns that the blessing is his, a fresh zeal enters his soul. He reads on, and gives his earnest *Amen* to the inspired prayer, that "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding [or heart] being enlightened; that ye may know" (ver. 17, 18).

God attracts to Himself by the display of what is ours in Christ. "Arise."

It was harvest-time, the time of the year's richest good, when Israel thus saw their place of blessing, but the Jordan (the Descender) on its impetuous way barred them out, for "Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest." The river was swift, wide, and deep. What then was to be done? Obey the word of the living God. Go forward, and leave God to deal with the difficulty. Each of us has his own difficulties in the path to full blessing of the soul. "I cannot be truly devoted to Christ until my aged relation dies," said one to us not many years ago, "for if I were it would break her heart." "If I were decided for Christ," said a man to us, with tears, "my friends would give me no rest." Arise, go forward, believe God, and leave the difficulty with Him.

"Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you," is a deeply practical word, for beholding the corn-fields was not eating their

fruits, nor was gazing on the mountains, digging out their wealth; the one condition which the Lord imposed upon His people for actual possession was, that as a matter of fact they should enter, and have foot-hold on the land which He had given them.

No ability to map out doctrines or dispensations, no power to see what this epistle teaches, or that prophet tells, is of itself practical spiritual possession; not what the eye takes in, but what the foot covers, is experimentally our own. The eye directs the foot, and the further the foot goes the more the eye sees. The eye beholds a vast expanse, the foot covers a very small space; and that little portion only of the truth of God which we have laboriously trodden is, as a matter of realization, our own.

All is ours in Christ; but such of our blessings only are ours, in our spiritual apprehension, as we have gained by the Spirit's teaching. Real possession becomes the portion of those who by individual contest, step by step, have won ground—"Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you." Are we ready to say, "How little have I covered with the sole of my foot; how small is the area that I have really won?" God is for us. Be strong, and of a good courage. Win in the strength God gives. Get direct from Him; shun that second-hand knowledge which never avails in the day of difficulty, nor gives strength in the hour of conflict. "Foot"-possessors in the church of God are comparatively few. Many are geographers, who can map out the varied doctrines of the Bible; few are travellers, who describe what this and that blessing is, having themselves found its preciousness.

In the purposes of Jehovah, Israel's possession was vast: "From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea towards the going down of the sun, shall be your coast." Now, save for a very limited period (1 Kings iv. 21), Israel has not entered upon these lengths and breadths; that day of permanent possession is yet to come. The Christian's portion in Christ is immeasurable; but to-day is his day of possession, for God, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ (1 Eph. i. 3), has made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. xi. 6). Yet what does this "all" mean? The most well-taught believer is simply learning what it is, as he advances day by day in the truth of God. The more he sees what the blessings are, the less does his apprehension seem to him to be, for God's gifts are, like Himself, infinite.

More than the bare knowledge that God has made all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places ours in Christ, is necessary to stimulate true Christian zeal; personal communion with Christ Himself, as to the truth of these heavenly blessings, is needed. Jehovah said to Joshua, "I will be with thee, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee"; and the Lord Jesus in effect has said the same to each believer. He will not allow the heart to sink, He will not fail to uphold us with His hand. We have, therefore, promised and secured to us, His abiding presence, His unfailing grace and strength, and the assurance of His never forsaking us.

In the exhortation before us there are three calls to strength and to courage: the first, because the pos-

sessions belong to God's people; the second, because in obedience to the word success is assured; the third, because the Lord Himself is with His people.

As to the first, Christ being risen from the dead, and seated above all power at God's right hand in the heavenly places, in Him His people have their blessings secured. Nothing stimulates Christian courage like this certainty. Jehovah had sworn to the fathers to give the land to Israel; the knowledge of and faith in God's purpose, therefore, were the strength of Israel's energy; and God, in His purpose of grace, is the source of our strength and courage to go forward. The glory will be ours, for "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God . . . therefore we are always confident." (2 Cor. v. 5, 6.) The foe will be overcome, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. viii. 31.) Self is silent when faith views God's thoughts, and herein is strength. Christ is risen from the dead. He is in heaven, and in Him are our blessings. Therefore, fellow Christian, let us go forward in this strength to enter practically upon our portion. "Stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." (1 Cor. xvi. 13.)

As to the second call to courage, we fall back upon God's thoughts as expressed in His word, in order to act obediently to Him. The written word opens to us the mind of God; there is the revelation of His gracious thoughts about His people, and there He records what He says is ours by grace. To obey that word is a command from God. In believing what God says, when He tells us how He has blessed us, we practically lay hold of these blessings. The courage that flows from faith in God's word makes the Christian soldier hardy

and resolute. He pursues the path of obedience because he believes the Scriptures.

Practical blessing lies in obedience to the word of God—yea, to *all* of His word. Herein is the condition of blessing. First we believe that what God says is ours in Christ, is really ours; next we lay hold of those blessings in the way He has enjoined us to lay hold of them. We can only go forward in soul as we both know and obey His word, and for this we need not only courage, but to be *very* courageous, for Satan will array himself against us immediately we put down our foot to tread the path of obedience to God.

Strength and courage to “observe to do” according to all the divine word, are of vital importance. The giants who overcome God’s people are not the enemies they encounter—for these are as nothing to God—the victorious giants are our own unbelief and disobedience.

We are called to obey God’s word as a whole—“All My law,”—not our particularly prized portion of it. When the believer follows his favourite lines of truth, he is not strong and very courageous in obeying the whole of God’s word. Some believers have selected from God’s word certain portions for their obedience most congenial to them, and thus have practically constructed a revised Bible! “All My law” is the divine exhortation.

A wise path will be a prosperous one, and the prosperous path is acting wisely on the straight line of obedience to the distinct instructions of the divine word. No deviation is lawful—“Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left.”

Now how shall intimate knowledge of the will of our

God be obtained? The word of Scripture is to be ever in our mouth (Josh. i. 8). To depart from it is certain failure. We want Scripture for anything. "It is written" must decide all questions. When a difficulty arises, our first duty is to hearken to, "Thus saith the Lord." A degenerate Christianity evades the plain truth of the divine word, and substitutes for it the voice of human authority. The book of the law has departed out of the mouth, and as a consequence, instead of prosperity, demoralization, confusion, and disorder exist among the soldiers.

Now, how shall the believer have his mouth filled with the words of his God? How shall he know what God says to him? By deep, painstaking, prayerful labour over it. The knowledge of even the letter of the word is not gained at once. Continual feeding upon the word is requisite, the whole soul needs to be taken up with it—"Thou shalt meditate thereon day and night." By filling the affections with the words of the sacred volume, by loving labour over the book of our God, by seeking the Holy Spirit's teaching, praying for the eyes of our heart's enlightenment, and for the spirit of revelation in the knowledge of God, the heart becomes so stored with its words, that we are able to observe to do, according to all that is written therein. And thence flow spiritual prosperity and good success. The great aim of the child and servant of God should be acquaintance with, and obedience to, his God's mind.

"Thou shalt meditate" is a distinct call, which should exercise the heart. Spiritually feeding upon the word, we gain the desired heart-knowledge. There is no hour more profitably spent than that in which the Christian is alone with God over His word, humbly pondering

upon God's thoughts in God's presence. A book-learnèd and a Spirit-taught Christian are very distinct. There may be a knowledge of the truth of the word, obtained by reading or instruction, where "thou shalt meditate" is but scantily observed. There may be an intellectual grasp of the doctrines and principles of Scripture, and what then? "Knowledge puffeth up!" The Christian, who has learned to enter in secret into God's presence as to knowledge, is necessarily humble and lowly in mind. We say necessarily so, because God's presence ever makes man humble.

Truly blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates therein day and night, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Psa. i. 3.) This beautiful figure is considered to be taken from the orange, which tree blossoms and bears fruit at one time, and is evergreen. The fragrance of Christ diffused from the believer; the sweetness of Christ waiting to be gathered from the believer; always the same Christ-like spirit; ever fresh, ever sustained by the living stream of the hidden water-courses! Where such orange-groves are found, how attractive they are! Let us seek for the sustaining nourishment of the water of the word entering into our spiritual being, reaching into that which the eye sees not, even to our roots, for then shall there be profitable testimony for God. Dryness and fruitlessness arise from not being Spirit-fed.

Having meditated upon the word, we are to observe to do according to all that is written therein, upon which course of action prosperity and success depend.

The third call for courage is because the Lord is with us (Jesh. i. 9).

God's own command is our authority, His presence is our power. God, who gives the command, is with the soldier who obeys His command. The strength here enjoined is that of the hand for taking and holding, and that of the knee not to be overthrown. In the Epistle to the Ephesians we are exhorted to be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might . . . For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places" (ch. vi. 10, 13) : which are to the Christian what the hosts of Canaan were to Israel. Neither must there be rest in this warfare, "for having done all," or, as the margin reads, "having overcome all," we are called upon to stand.

Like sentinels at their posts, they must "stand" who hope to retain what they gain. It is ever easier to obtain than to maintain in the things of this life, and how distinctly is this the case in the things of God. Persistency in God's strength, and in courage, is required. Many a Christian, who followed in the path of self-sacrifice to reach the knowledge of some truth of God, having obtained what he sought, has settled down into indifference and spiritual sloth. The apostle Peter warns that, unless there be adding to what is obtained, we shall lose what we have. (1 Pet. i. 5-10.)

Finally come the words, "Be not afraid or dismayed." Fear is a bad symptom in the Christian. Fear indicates the presence of unbelief in God, or of some unjudged evil in ourselves. Not, indeed, that

godly loving fear, that reverence, which dreads lest God should not be really obeyed, or His will should not be clearly apprehended, but that fear which quails before the enemy and hinders Christian warfare. Firm faith in God dispels dismay before enemies.

The principles set out in this stirring exhortation to Israel are of the last importance to ourselves in this our day. Therefore may each of us know the grace and the power of the appeal.

CHAPTER III.

The Command to Tarry Three Days.

“Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it.”—JOSH. i. 10, 11.

THE stirring exhortation just considered produced an immediate result. Joshua communicated its spirit and authority to the officers of Israel, who commanded the people to be ready for action, and thus the whole camp arose from end to end.

When Christ by the Spirit stirs the souls of His people, He does so through His appointed leaders. Joshua communicated the result of the divine exhortation to the officers, and thus the authority of the divine command passed down to each of the rank and file of Jehovah's army. Thus God, by His Spirit, worked through leaders when He established Christianity on earth, when in His grace He revived the great truth of justification by faith at the Reformation, and when He quickened in His saints' hearts a burning love for souls, in the days of Whitfield and Wesley. First, the overseers of His people are possessed with the truth

of the word, and then, through them, the people. Christ, by the Holy Spirit, makes living and energetic, in the souls of men of His choice, the truths of the Scriptures He is pleased to revive in the Church at large. In the scene immediately before us, the word of God ran through the chosen channels till the whole camp was alive with the energy the word had first produced in Joshua's soul.

The Christian soldier, in whose soul the truth produces a distinct energy in life and ways, becomes in a greater or less degree an "officer" in the Lord's army. According to the unhindered action of the Spirit within him, he is a captain of a hundred or of a thousand, the power of Christ within him influencing other Christians in the ways of the Lord. It should be remembered that it is only as the believer is continually influenced by the word of God that he can rightly influence others in the things of the Lord's mind. True godly influence results from the Christian being in communion with Christ. Many an one who was once an "officer" in the "host," by letting his soul fall out of the place of dependence on Christ, has become but a false leader of God's people; and the wider the influence for good once was, the wider the influence for evil becomes. This will be presently unfolded in the instances of Achan, and of the princes who were deceived by the Gibeonites.

Notwithstanding the stir the command of the Lord produced in the camp, the people had to prepare food and wait a certain period of time before crossing the Jordan. "Then Joshua commanded the officers of the

people, saying, Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals, for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it." (Josh. i. 10, 11.) It was seemly and right, that a process should go on in the camp as one result of the word of God being brought to it.

A preparedness was necessary. This indeed had been the burden of much of the last words of Moses, as recorded in the close of the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy. There was an intense desire on his part that the people should consider and approach and enter the land of Canaan in the right state, in the spirit of separation to God, and in dependence on God—His grace toward them the while filling their souls. Such practical lessons we cannot press too earnestly on our own individual spirits.

A preparedness is necessary in the Christian soldier who hears his Lord's words. We have to learn that human energy cannot cross rivers of death, or break down walls of this world's strongholds; and if we be aroused to follow the Lord, it must be in His own way. Impulse is not faith. Going forward in the mere strength of humanly-acquired knowledge of God's truth, is not being led by the Spirit. God would not have His people act in the excitement of freshly-gained knowledge, and well would it often be, if instead of pushing on in the impulse of newly-acquired truth, there were first a tarrying, as it were, three days, to digest it, to make it, by the power of God's Spirit, thoroughly part of the new man.

According to the word before us, the camp had to be

put into a properly-organized state for the passage of the river, for it was not now with them as it had been when they came out of Egypt in haste. Thus the soul of the Christian soldier needs to be subject to God, fit for the Lord to make use of, steady and calm, and prepared by grace. The truth of God must become part of ourselves, or our weakness will betray itself in the day of battle; but the knowledge of the divine word, having sunk down deep into the heart, will stay the soul when its support is most needed. Bare knowledge cannot be used in the presence of the enemy. A truth of God, learned as a matter of intelligence from another, without being experienced in our own souls, is knowledge without power. Knowledge is power to a Christian only so far as he is filled with the Spirit.

There is no necessity for a set interval of time elapsing in order to effect a needed exercise of soul, for God can and does work similar results in different periods in the souls of His people; but there is a needs-be for the practical and experimental acquaintance with the truth of God.

The three days seem to carry the mind back to Israel's departure from Egypt. So far as we can learn, three days were spent by them, from the night they left the land of bondage to the completion of their salvation at the Red Sea. "Three days" speak to us of the familiar period of time of the cross and the empty grave of the Lord Jesus Christ. Israel had bidden farewell to Egypt through the death of the paschal lamb, and were secured by the passage of the Red Sea. On those shores the song had arisen, "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which

Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation." (Ex. xv. 13.) Their place in Jehovah's holy habitation was the subject of their song, and this truly was the counsel of God concerning them. At that moment they entered into the purposes of God with exceeding joy and triumph; and sang, "all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away" (ver. 16). But the wilderness had intervened, with its forty long and unexpected years of testing; and now these years were ended, and once more Canaan, as their possession, was the one thought of the camp, and the three days' pause was ordained for them of God.

Shittim, the last stage of their wilderness journey, was left: Shittim, the place of flowering acacias—the trees, the wood of which was used for the boards of the tabernacle and the ark of God; Shittim, with its memories of the wilderness, and its dark remembrances of their sin with Moab. "And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over." (Josh. iii. 1.)

Let us, too, "lodge" for a season at the banks of our river of Jordan. Its waters are both broad and deep, they flow swiftly. Who shall bridge them? What ferry shall cross them? Divine power, and divine power alone, can lead us into the glowing Canaan on the other side of our river. Our possessions are in Christ, in heaven; and heaven is only to be reached by man through the death of Christ. Death, in itself, to man is destruction: the swift river would sweep him away for ever. Let us look into the waters and consider, for thereby Christ, in His death for us, will be more wonderful in our eyes,

and the grace of God toward us, in associating us with Christ in His death, will become to us more exceeding in its greatness. The knowledge of our death with Christ is the first step towards the primary requirements of Christian soldiership.

CHAPTER IV.

Who is on the Lord's side?

“And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying, Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, The Lord your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land. Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them; until the Lord have given your brethren rest, as He hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the Lord your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the Lord's servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising.”—JOSH. i. 12-15.

JOSHUA, having commanded the officers of the people, next gave special directions “to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh”—the two and a half tribes who had already received their possessions on the wilderness side of the Jordan. It was a different kind of message from that given to the “officers of the people;” indeed, a distinction is apparent in various ways between the two and a half and the nine and a half tribes of Israel.

A deeply interesting theme is thus opened up, nor one simply concerning the history of Israel as recorded in the book before us, but also for ourselves, since “all these things happened unto them for ensamples [or by

way of figure]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Cor. x. 11.)

To obtain a right judgment of a moral or spiritual movement, it is necessary to go back to its beginning. An insight into the first principles which led the two and a half tribes to seek their inheritance on the east side of Jordan is gained by turning to the thirty-second chapter of the Book of Numbers. There we read how these tribes "saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle" (ver. 1). "Wherefore, said they [to Moses], if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan" (ver. 5). In plain language, they did not wish to enter into the inheritance towards which the face of Israel was turned, and whither the hopes of the nation aspired, but, instead, they were determined to remain in the rich pastures of Moab. To rest on the eastern side of the river, and to build cities there, was to fall short of the divine purpose of Israel's blessing, and their words, "We will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, or forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward" (ver. 19), mark a determination to refuse to dwell in the legitimate portion of Israel, and also show a spirit of severance from those who would be faithful to the word of promise. The indignation of Moses was roused at the resolution of these two and a half tribes; for not only was this resolve sufficient to stir the Lord's anger against the whole of Israel, but the sight of two and a half tribes sitting still in the enjoyment of what had been won already, was enough to discourage the rest of the people from

going forward and winning what Jehovah had promised as the portion of all. He compared their desire to the sin of the spies at Eschol, and saw in it an earnest of Israel's reaping again those bitter fruits, which they had been warned would be the result of despising the promised land. Grieved at their spirit, he said, "Shall ye sit here? And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord hath given them . . . ? And they came near unto him," and said they would leave their wives and children and cattle behind, and go themselves to the war. Expediency argues plausibly, and finds many ready ways of gaining its object; but it is a poor thing to fight God's battles unless for Him alone; for where the treasure is, there the heart will be also. Let such as are not in spirit inheriting "yonder and forwards," who are not fighting the fight of faith with a whole heart, consider what it is to "sit here."

The languid believer is a sore check upon the devotion of others, and thereby are wrought, not only dishonour to God and wrong to ourselves, but robbery from others of their zeal. One false step usually begets another—evil leads to evil. These tribes, beginning with the spirit of expediency, added to expediency wilfulness, and to wilfulness schism—"We will not inherit with them." To carry out their purpose they were prepared to make a breach in Israel. "We," and "them," said they of Jehovah's one undivided family. Jehovah had given one inheritance to His people, but they would have their inheritance, and Israel should have theirs!—"We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance."

Moses accepted the compromise that the armed men of these two and a half tribes should go in the van and help Israel "into their place"; but still the fact remains—they did not possess "over this Jordan."

God permitted them to carry out their wishes, as He so often permits His people to have their own way for a time; but, sooner or later, a man will reap that which he has sown, as Moses warned the two and a half tribes at the time of this their determination, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

It is profitable, in connection with the failure of the nation as a whole to possess the land, to consider the divine beginning for Israel in the promise made respecting their inheritance.

Jehovah established a covenant with Abraham, and gave to his seed the land of Canaan, together with the surrounding country from the Nile to the Euphrates. (Gen. xv. 18.) All this land was made over to Abraham's seed without any condition. Here we have divine purpose, and when divine purpose in giving is our contemplation, human responsibility in acquiring must be kept out of sight. It is true of all saints this day that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him. All these blessings are the possession of all saints by the purpose and will of God. Human responsibility has not one whit to do with this, for all these gracious things are ours in Christ, and we are blessed, not according to our behaviour on earth, but "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." (Eph. i. 4.) Herein lies the absolute

character and the immeasurable breadth of our blessings in Christ.

But the unalterable favour of God does not shorten our responsibility. When the seed of Abraham rose into a nation, Jehovah addressed that nation respecting His promise to Abraham, and He then enforced upon His people their responsibility thus—"If thou shalt indeed obey his voice [that of the angel whom He sent], and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries." (Read Ex. xxiii. 20-33.) Israel's prosperity was, therefore, conditional—it was dependent on their obedience. The promised possession was theirs by divine sovereignty; their prosperity was conditional on their behaviour; and so it is with the Christian.

Again, some forty years later, when Israel was about to enter the promised possession, Jehovah afresh enjoined upon Israel obedience to the word as the condition of victory (Deut. xi. 22, 23); adding, moreover, to the necessity of obedience to the commandments that of practical possessing (ver. 24, 25). And so, too, it is with believers now; obedience to the word, and faith-entrance into spiritual blessings, are necessary for their experimental possession. There is no clashing between the sovereignty of God in blessing His people, and their responsibility to obey His word. God by grace has made secure in Christ to all His people all spiritual blessings; but none the less does every man reap what he sows. The two and a half tribes proved the truth of this. They were determined to fall short of the land to be won, and they were the first to go into captivity.

In the part of the history of Israel now before us, as related in the Book of Joshua, we find ourselves in the camp of Israel, at the passage of the Jordan. Our backs are towards the wilderness and the south; our faces towards Lebanon and the north; the country stretches across the Jordan as far as the Mediterranean on the left; and the river Euphrates forms the eastern boundary on the right. The whole of the expanse is Israel's by promise; but the land specially given, and which they had left Egypt to inherit, was "over this Jordan," and the nations to be dispossessed were on the west of the river, not on the east, where the two and a half tribes had chosen their portion.

In order to possess, Israel had first to dispossess; and so it is with the Christian, who gets for himself nothing but what he wins by driving out enemies.

In the word of exhortation to these two and a half tribes, it is impossible not to feel that their leader is addressing men, who, though of Israel, have interests and objects which differ from those of the nation as such. As Joshua speaks to them, he seems to turn his face towards the mountains of Gilead, rather than to the range of Lebanon, he seems "to view the sunrising" rather than to look "towards the going down of the sun." He calls for "all the mighty men of valour" of their tribes, it is true, but to that call only about one-third of these warriors respond.

Two standpoints are thus distinctly presented, that of Joshua, or rather Jehovah, and that of the two and a half tribes. Canaan, the land of the Hittites, was to Joshua the home side of Jordan; the land of Gilead was the home side to the two and a half tribes. We

form our ideas of spiritual things from the standpoint we occupy. Let us see to it that our Christianity is learned from the divine standpoint—the other side of death, resurrection with Christ. May this be indeed our home side of the river.

Gilead, we say, was their home, and a Christian is in his life what he is at home. He may go out at times on the warpath, but the true test of his spiritual condition is the character of his inner life. All the time of their wars in Canaan, these forty thousand were fighting for others, not for themselves; and it is a most solemn thing when Christians in spiritual warfare are, as it were, only auxiliary troops. Genuine Christian soldiers are exceedingly rare; they are soldiers for life. To such everything subserves the one great object—the pleasing of Him who has called us to be soldiers. “Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle,” on the east of the river, were the true witnesses of the actual dwelling-place of the forty thousand. Sooner or later these warriors would return home, and not a man of them was a soldier across the Jordan for his lifetime. The wars of the Lord prove men. All God’s people must engage in spiritual battle; but, like the forty thousand, numbers fight the fight of faith with the prospect of returning to their ease and enjoyments here. Too few fight on with the object of obtaining victories for God on earth, and think not, dream not, of rest until they shall reach their home in glory.

Welcome, indeed, the help of every believer and every word of encouragement, but would that “all saints” knew the true Christian soldier character!

Some take it that the words of courageous answer

recorded in verses 16 and 18, chapter 1, are those of Israel as a whole through their captains to their leader; that "and they" mean not merely the forty thousand of the two and a half tribes, but the whole people, who with these forty thousand replied to the words of Joshua. If such be the case, it is the great, the strong, answer of faith, the response of the nation stirred to go forth to the wars of the Lord. Israel was the army of God appointed for the destruction of Jericho, Israel came into Canaan to sweep its iniquitous inhabitants from the face of the land, and to do this work of judgment in the strength of Jehovah. Their faith responded to the exhortation of their God, and echoed back these grand words—"only be strong and of a good courage."

CHAPTER V.

The Coming Kingdom.

“The kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.”—REV. i. 9.

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.”—HEB. xi. 30.

JERICHO, situated in the beautiful plains of the Jordan, was indeed a “place of fragrance.” It was a city of vast strength in a position of exceeding loveliness. It is a figure of this world devoted to judgment by the word of God. Christ will come from heaven with His holy ones, and in flaming fire will execute judgment on the peoples of this earth; He will overthrow the strength and overturn the foundations of this world, and after that He will set up His kingdom and reign. Not only will the present system of this world be destroyed, but the god of this world will be arrested and imprisoned in the pit during the reign of Christ. (Rev. xx. 1-3.)

The coming of Christ was continually proclaimed by the early Christians, and the rights of His kingdom were constantly declared. That testimony told its tale in men’s consciences. Heartfelt witness as to God’s judgments ever appals the unready. In our day, the expectation of Christ’s advent in judgment to this earth, and of His coming kingdom when He shall

reign over it, have too little place in the testimony of Christians; we do not refer to the bare knowledge of the doctrine of Christ's coming, which has no power to move souls. It has pleased God, that nearly 2,000 years should pass by, and the judgment long foretold still tarries, the kingdom of Christ is not yet set up in power on the earth. There is a double end in this, for on the one hand, it is the will of God that His people should learn practically what this world is, both as a wilderness and as a battle-field; and on the other, that certain characteristics in the world should be developed.

Forty years had to elapse for Israel in order that they might learn wilderness lessons, but, in the purposes of God, those forty years were one step, as it were, from Egypt to Canaan, for with Him a thousand years are but one day. The wilderness came in as a test to prove the people, as do wilderness experiences prove God's people now. God's purpose for His saints, is glory with Christ and reigning with Christ; consequently faith reaches right on and looks for the glory and the kingdom. Faith knows that the rule of this world must be overthrown, and that Christ shall reign; and, in the power of God's Spirit, looks on to the coming judgments and to the establishment of the kingdom, while learning the lessons of life.

In the purposes of God, the world's ways must reach their development, certain characteristics of evil must progress to completion, before Christ comes to the earth in judgment. Hence, since the judgment tarries, it may be said, "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." (Gen. xv. 16.) However, the Christian has to keep the

eye on Him whose coming to the air may take place at any moment, while rejoicing in the long-suffering of God in His mercy to sinners by His gospel. The development of events is not the pole-star whereby the Christian directs his steps. "What saith the Scripture?" guides him.

With these considerations we follow the two spies, whom Joshua had sent secretly from the camp at Shittim to spy out Jericho. The whole of the incidents attached to their mission may be characterized as hidden work; just as in this day a secret work of God is in progress, while the course of the world is plain to all eyes. Faith in the word of God as to judgment about to be revealed, is a mighty force in this our Jericho for labouring on in the hidden work of soul-winning for God.

The two spies were directed (Josh. ii. 1) by God to the very house in the city where a prepared heart was to be found. Those who act by faith do not waste time, but are led by God to the right places and persons. Rahab's house would apparently be a most unlikely one in which to find fear of the Lord, but God never makes mistakes, and such of His servants as are directed in their ways by Him do not go astray.

Standing with Rahab upon the flat roof of her house (ver. 8) and looking around, we learn a lesson for our own times. Mark the development of the city, its recent improvements, its great and high walls, and its brazen gates. Look at the face of nature; as since the creation of the world the mountains stand in their places; as heretofore the valleys are golden with ripening corn, the hillsides purple with fruitful vines, for lo! it is the time of harvest. Prosperity and hope of increasing greatness

abound, the expectation of the future fills the soul. How little does the world dream that the sickle which is about to reap the harvest, is one of judgment!

The ancient Jordan flows on, his banks covered with deep waters, as if proudly saying, "I am a barrier to the enemy's approach." The sun, which they worship, calm in the heavens, sinks beneath the mountains; shedding its rich glow over the scented valleys, and the people kiss their hands to it. The business of the city, its commerce and its luxury, the eating flesh and drinking wine, marrying and giving in marriage, birth and death, go on as in former generations. To the scoffers in the city the tale of judgment has grown old; forty long years ago they, or their fathers, heard how Jehovah had dried up the waters of the Red Sea for the people who now at their gates claim their land, but the tale is old, there is nothing now for them to fear!

The testimony as to Christ's coming and His world-kingdom is already ridiculed. "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Pet. iii. 4.) Be it so, but "when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them." (1 Thess. v. 3.) The scoff of infidelity and its destructive effects cannot be denied, but neither can be denied the power of that testimony to Christ's coming and kingdom, which His people live out. When a believer, in the power of faith, testifies by his manner of life to the reality of Christ's coming, men tremble. The acting out of what a man believes convicts souls. Doctrinal intelligence convinces no man, practical behaviour is unanswerable. That person has something which we

have not, men say of him who lives Christ, and such a life demonstrates the faith of eternity to them.

The two spies were the exponents of their expectations, they came to Jericho, not to make it their home, but to spy it out and to be gone. The Christian is sent into the world to be a witness for God and to Christ's coming and kingdom. Satan cannot destroy the truth, but he nullifies its power wherever the testimony of God's people becomes word only, and lacks the energy of faith.

While the two spies were in converse with Rahab and listening to her strange tale of melting hearts and departed courage because of Jehovah's might, the king of Jericho heard that they were in his city. At once there arose direct opposition between him and Rahab. Alliance with enemies is madness, breaking with the world and Satan by God's people there must be, and in taking sides with God is alone security. Satan knows his doom, he has read the Bible better than men, he is no infidel. The devils "believe and tremble." (Jas. ii. 19.) Satan knows that the world-kingdom of Christ will surely come (Rev. xi. 15), that he will not always be "the god of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4), and that before long the kingdoms of earth will have had their day. He is really on the defensive, and all his attacks against the truth of God are made to preserve his possessions as long as he can.

The wisdom of faith invariably outwits Satan. Rahab "hid the men" (Josh. ii. 4) as soon as they were enquired after. If a believer takes to planning, let him remember that Satan is a craftier planner than he. If the believer trusts his Father like a little child, then Satan is beaten before the battle begins.

Because of the lie Rahab told, cavillers would cast a slur on the veracity of the whole story. But God tells the truth about her character and her ways, as about everything; it is man who hides what is not to his credit. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." (Heb. xi. 31.) Her faith, not her falsehood, is commended. Easterns are proverbially addicted to lying; not that it is intended by this remark to imply that a national characteristic is an excuse for sin; on the contrary, so much the worse for the nation thus characterised. The testimony of the old poet of Crete was, the Cretans are liars, sluggish gluttons, savage beasts; to which testimony the apostle Paul added his own evidence, thus giving the necessary twofold witness to a fact; and so the record stands of a people being liars. Whether of west or east, lying and deceit are hateful to God; "rebuke them sharply" was the word to Titus, because of their national characteristics. No one need suggest that the word of God makes light of a lie, because it tells the truth about everybody, Rahab included. But why should the infidels of Christendom expect morality from believers in God? Their objection, founded on Rahab's lie, to the truth of this part of the word of God, is a testimony that they believe God is true and cannot countenance falsehood, and that He will do what He says He will. He will surely execute judgment on this world, and on its infidelity and its liars, as He has said. Rahab had no right to tell her king a lie any more than a man has liberty to tell a lie to the father of lies. Had her faith in Jehovah gone further, she would have trusted in Him, instead of in her deception, for deliverance. A

soldier of Christ telling a falsehood in Christ's name is simply a traitor to his Lord.

By faith this poor heathen believed that the days of her city were numbered; her thoughts were not with her fellow-citizens, but with the Lord's people. In the two spies she beheld the messengers to her of the God in heaven above and on earth beneath, and her conviction was, "I know that the Lord hath given you the land." "I know that the Lord has done this" is the incontestable reasoning of faith. Faith knows what God will do, simply because God has spoken. "I know" is an immovable assurance in the heart of the child of faith, which gives infidelity no point of attack whatever.

Faith is at rest towards God and active towards men. The testimony of the spies filled Rahab with assurance as to her own salvation, and with energy for the lives of her whole family. She believed judgment would presently fall on her city: her cry was therefore, "Save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death."

For the fulfilment of this desire she sought a true token, and the spies gave her their solemn assurance, "Our life for yours." In a similar way we have the bare word of God for our confidence. On it we rely for our eternal good. "Give me a true token," does anyone say? God's revealed word is the assurance for our souls.

Having received the promise, to her based on the life of the spies, she "sent them out another way" (Jas. ii. 25), letting them down by a cord from her window, for her house was built upon the wall. Then they, being

outside of Jericho, gave the outward token, the sign to Rahab—"this line of scarlet thread," and they bade her bind that cord in her window. Whence came this line? Was it from off their garments, or was it the cord by which she had let them down?

Scarlet is a familiar emblem of regality. Rahab bound the bright colour in her window in faith for her own salvation through the word of the spies, and in hope of the coming of her saviours. Its indelible hue, the colour which arises from death, proclaimed the kingdom, for the crimson dye is due to the death of the little creature whence it comes, and may point to the blood of Jesus, whose kingdom shall be established in the virtue of His reconciling death. The scarlet line was the silent witness of Rahab's faith, just as the expectation of Christ's kingdom should be the Christian's witness to Christ, the Coming One. Have we each one the scarlet cord in our windows? Does our Lord see that we, who trust in His blood, are indeed looking for His coming and His glory?

Her dwelling was on the wall, as far from the centre of the city as possible—just the place for a believer who is in, but is not of, the world. Her house was the only place in the city of destruction where salvation could be had—just what should characterize the homes of those who look for Christ's kingdom. Her window faced out of Jericho, and the scarlet cord was bound in it—what should be true of the outlook of every house where Christ is known; its windows should not look towards the world, but towards the Coming One. Her door was open to Jericho, to get people into the place of safety—a lesson for us all, for every believer's house should be

open, as it were, to invite people to blessing. Outside that door was certain death—a warning to all. Moreover she bound the scarlet line in her window as the spies departed—"Now is the accepted time," was her practical belief, for to-morrow might be destruction.

Rahab showed her faith by her works. She spent her time in bringing in her nearest and dearest, her relations and friends: none of them were left to perish in the overthrow. By her persuasion she brought them home to herself. Solemn lesson to those Christians, who, while they say, they know Christ is coming, bestir not themselves for the salvation of sinners. One true test of our faith that Christ's coming may occur, we know not when, is our zeal for the immediate salvation of those whom we love. "Thou and thy house," is the divine word, and each believer's house should be a centre of blessing. If it be not, so his work for Christ outside his own doors must be questionable—"Bring them home to thyself." If any man say he believes Christ may come this day, and is apathetic as to the salvation of souls, and especially as to that of those of his own household and circle, let him ponder over these words, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (Jas. ii. 26.)

No message of mercy came to Jericho, and it is written, "Now is the judgment of this world." (John xii. 31.) No good news is sent now by God to the world as such, for Christ who came here has been cast out, and He is coming from heaven to judge the world. The gospel is "to every creature," . . . "in all the world" (Mark xvi. 15), but not to the world as a system. All who believe are delivered from this present

evil world's doom, are saved from its end, and delivered from the wrath to come. A false gospel inverts this truth, for it cries, "Make the world good, improve society, educate man up to holiness," and refuses to admit the fact, that sinners need salvation out of this world, as did Rahab out of Jericho.

May God stir up His people, one and all, to faith in Christ's appearing and kingdom, and to the certain end of this world, and then there will arise real earnestness for the salvation of souls from the coming wrath! Wherever the reality of Christ's appearing and kingdom possesses the soul of a believer, that man is marked off from the rest as a Christian soldier. Toil on, labour on, he must. He is constrained to fill up these last priceless moments, which will so soon be over. Already the night is far spent, already the Morning Star shines in the hearts of His own, "yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

Upon the return of the two spies to the camp they brought a good report to the people of Israel, that sort of soul-inspiring report which stirs up to energy for God. They spoke of victories yet to come: "Truly, the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land, for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us." Their hearts had melted like wax before the face of Israel. Strong faith makes strong hearts.

Forty years previously the faint-hearted spies had brought discouragement into the camp of Israel; they had judged by the testimony of their own eyes, and unbelief makes hearts to melt. The real state of the

people of the land they knew not. This secret, hidden from Israel for forty years because of their murmuring and unbelief, Rahab's words declare. With what different eyes will two servants of the Lord look upon the same battle-field! One regards all as lost before the contest begins, seeing but giants, and cities walled to heaven; the other sees God. One regards himself as a grasshopper, and is frightened away from the field, and infects all he meets with the same fear; the other, strong by reason of faith, stirs up the courage of his brethren. The one sees the outside of the world's walls, and the brazen faces of its infidel giants; the other sees into the hearts of men, which, with all their talk, tremble at the thought of death and of the coming judgment.

What kind of spies are we? What is our testimony?

CHAPTER VI.

Entrance into the Promised Possession.

“And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host; and they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore.

“And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.”

“And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel.”—JOSH. iii. 2-5, 7.

THE action of the book begins with recounting how Joshua rose early in the morning, and, with all Israel, left the camp at Shittim and came to the borders of the Jordan. There is a remarkable group of lessons in the teaching commencing with the third chapter and ending with the sixth. Such divine instruction as these chapters contain demands, as the very first requirement in those that hear them, diligence of soul. Joshua, in his energy, rose early in the morning; a lively state of soul is needful if we would not miss our lessons in grace and glory. Christians cannot see divine truths so long as they sleep. “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” (Eph. v. 14.)

Three distinct lessons shine out in the verses given at the head of this chapter. First, every eye was to be on the ark; second, the people were to sanctify themselves; third, Joshua, personally, was to be magnified.

The first is of the deepest practical importance. Fixing the eye on Christ, the ark, is the only means whereby God's ways for His people can be understood. By no other plan will the soul be filled with God's thoughts. The officers went through the host with the command: Observe the ark, leave a space between it and you, for Israel is going a way never before trodden. Every genuine officer amongst God's people, every servant duly commissioned by God to lead, has but one voice to those he addresses—"Look at Christ, keep the eye on Christ. With reverential steps give Him the pre-eminence. Follow where He leads." Where the path may be is not the question; where Christ leads is the consideration. Obedience to His voice relieves from the thousand questions and difficulties which hinder progress in divine things.

Israel had the pillar of fire to lead them out of Egypt, they had the ark to lead them into Canaan. In either case they had but to follow the divine guidance, for they could not make a way for themselves through the waters. Efforts after path-making hinder many from treading that which God has made, but in looking to Christ the path of blessing appears before the feet. The steps of faith are of necessity ever new, and it is simply by looking off unto Jesus that we can "know the way by which we must go."

In the wilderness, if the ark abode beneath its curtains, the people remained in their tents; if it went

forward, they followed. And as they were now about to tread a path hitherto untrodden, one of which they had no knowledge, in an especial manner they needed to observe the leadings of the ark—"that they might know the way by which they must go."

Yet while they were to observe the ark, and follow it, they were not to come near unto it; far from pressing upon it, they were to leave a set distance between it and them, a measured space of two thousand cubits. And the Christian must ever give the Lord Jesus Christ His full place, for in all things He must have the pre-eminence. (Col. i. 18.) There is a divine distance between Him and His people. He is the way, and He has made it. He is the leader, and He leads. We learn God's way as we see Him, we take it as we follow Him. If looking one at another, we are not looking off unto Jesus. Every eye must be on Him. If the Israelites had not left a space between themselves and the ark, the fore ranks would have prevented those that followed from seeing it. How happily the officers directed the eyes of the people from their own guidance to the guiding ark! What a brilliant example for preachers and teachers of Christ! The Christian must have an uninterrupted view of Christ if he would walk in God's way, a view of Christ Himself and not of officers, who, though they can direct where to look for salvation and blessing, can neither save nor bless. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?" The great Apostle never obstructed the vision of the weakest saint by placing himself between that saint and Christ.

At the Red Sea, God made the path by the rod of

His power; there Israel had the pillar of glory behind them, and the way cleft through the sea before them. At Jordan, the rod gave place to the ark. The ark, in a special way, represents a personal Christ: its shittim wood—His humanity; its gold—His deity; its contents (the law)—His righteousness as a man. All testify to Him personally. The sign for their movement, their only sign, was the guiding ark.

“Ye have not passed this way heretofore” (since yesterday, and the third day, margin) is true experimentally of numbers of God’s people in relation to their entrance into the heavenly places. Experimentally, we say; for, in fact, all saints of God are now seated in the heavenly places in Christ. It is not possible to be a true Christian, and not to be seated by God in Christ in the heavenly places. Yet, if following God, the believer will often find himself, practically speaking, treading an unknown path—a simple but solemn reality, which tests faith.

In the next place, the word to Israel was, “Sanctify yourselves.” Reverence and holiness were the necessary conditions to seeing the wonders the Lord was about to work for them. No truth of God can be lightly taken up by the believer save at his spiritual peril; and unless there be this holy fear of the Lord our God, we shall not in spirit truly enter into His work for us. Walking by faith in the way the Lord Jesus has made, apart from reverential footsteps, is impossible. Then how shall we sanctify ourselves? No outward sanctification, or external separation from any form of evil, will avail. True heart work, in the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, is essential. “The flesh profiteth

nothing." The Spirit of God is the Sanctifier. The more closely the Jewish ceremonial sanctification is regarded, the more evidently is it seen that its figures pointed to true heart and conscience work.

In the third place, Jehovah promised Joshua a place of glory in the sight of all Israel, such as he had never had before, one which was to be as that of Moses when he was the divinely appointed leader of God's people. This is very sweet to the true Christian, who loves his blessed Lord and Saviour. It is a joyous thing to know that the mighty work of God in raising up the Lord from the dead, and in giving life in Him risen to all for whom He died, is direct honour and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. The more genuinely believers receive in the soul what God has done in raising up Christ from the dead, and in setting them in heavenly places, the more their hearts magnify Christ.

Let us exalt Jesus, as our Saviour from sin and from this Egypt's doom, and also as our Leader, step by step, through this wilderness world; let us also magnify Him as He is, the ascended Son of Man in glory. He is not fully magnified in the soul until He is known as the Joshua, the risen and ascended Lord. Jehovah promised that Joshua should be magnified before the Jordan was passed, and Israel accepted Joshua as their God-honoured leader by the emptied Jordan. Christians know Christ as their Joshua by His having overcome death, and by His entrance into heaven. If the true Christian has one desire more deep than another in the blessing of God's people, it is that they should so know and so enjoy their blessings in Christ risen as to magnify Him.

CHAPTER VII.

A DIGRESSION.

Deliberance from Wrath.

“When I see the blood, I will pass over you.”—Exodus xii. 13.

BEFORE enquiring into the passage of the Jordan, it will be well to glance at the types of the Passover and the Red Sea. It must not be forgotten that, had it not been for Israel's unbelief (Numb. xiv.), the passage of the Jordan would have followed close upon that of the Red Sea. The wilderness wanderings of forty years were, therefore, a parenthesis of Israel's unbelief in the midst of the purposes of God for them. The three types occurred at different intervals, but they all direct us to the one work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore it is well to look at them together.

It is impossible to take two steps at one time in learning divine truth. Theories may be intellectually mastered, but not one step further does the soul go God-wards, than that which it is enabled to take by the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. Each such step is real advance, and God strengthens us by the word to go on further in its truths; and every truth learned with God is a step on to fresh knowledge of Him in the word.

Israel did not reach Canaan, until they had passed the Jordan; and they did not reach the Jordan, until they had crossed the wilderness; and they did not enter the wilderness, until they had passed through the Red Sea; and they did not pass through the Red Sea, until they had left Egypt. Step by step did God lead them on.

We will look rapidly at these steps, beginning with that which took them out of Egypt.

Now many believers are at this present moment experimentally in Egypt—that is, they are proving the world to be a house of bondage, and they long to be delivered, and to be free from it in spirit. Such obviously are not experimentally in Canaan, fighting God's battles on His appointed battle-ground in heavenly places.

The tidings of the land of Canaan, flowing with milk and honey, came to Israel in their slavery, in their bonds, in their thrall, when they had not so much as thought of emancipation, or had ever contemplated being Jehovah's army to conquer the seven nations, greater and mightier than themselves, in possession of Canaan.

The people of Israel were slaves, and Jehovah's gracious words to them, through Moses and Aaron, in their affliction were as music in their ears; so now is the sweeter message of everlasting mercy to the sinner weighed down under the sense of bondage. The gospel to such an one is an unutterably wonderful melody of divine love. God loves the sinner, God looks in compassion upon him just as he is; yes, "God commends His love towards us," even while we were yet sinners, even while we were still the slaves of Satan. The unspeakable goodness of God in loving us while we are

bond-slaves of Satan and children of the world's vanity, His grace, in speaking of blessing and rest to our despairing souls, awes the spirit to thankful and wondering reverence of His name. Israel bowed the head and worshipped on hearing their glad tidings; so do we on hearing God's good news to us. (Ex. iv. 29-31.)

But this gladness is not to be mistaken for the restful knowledge of redemption, nor the realization of absolute freedom in Christ from slavery. Deep distress frequently follows such gladness. Satan is never willing to let one of his slaves go; he puts out his strength to hold them still, and the experience of his power results in misery rolling in upon the soul like waves of the sea. Frequently to such an extent is the power of Satan felt, that when fresh and more marvellous unfoldings of God's grace are made known than those which first told of heaven, the sinner, instead of being comforted by the word, is like Israel, when "they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." (See Ex. vi. 9.)

Now to live for God and to fight for God, to be a soldier, while in the spirit of a slave, is impossible. To be a Christian soldier, and to fight in the wars of the Lord, while groaning under the weight of spiritual chains, and while not knowing whether we are redeemed or not, cannot be. Men "bound in affliction and iron" (Psa. cvii. 10) are not fighting for God. Spiritual freedom is necessary for this warfare. God's way is to break our bonds to set us free, and then to make us His soldiers to fight the enemy and to free others.

Break ourselves away from the grip of the enemy we cannot, nor can we in our own might escape from the

world, of which he is god. (2 Cor. iv. 4.) God alone can deliver, and deliver He will, for His purpose is to bless. Whatever Israel might experience, Jehovah had said, "Let my people go, that they may serve me." (Ex. vii. 16.) No power in hell or on earth shall thwart His purpose.

It was at the very moment of the people's deepest anguish of spirit that Jehovah gave Moses and Aaron "a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt" (the reality of the oppressor's authority was recognized by God, and none the less is that of the power of Satan to-day); and the charge was "to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt" (ch. vi. 13). And in what way were the slaves to be brought out? As escaped slaves? No, "according to their armies" (ver. 26), with all the dignity of the host of the Lord.

Now how did God bring His people out? By the blood of the slain lamb. Israel's bondage came to an end by blood: through death they were set free from death. God's one way of deliverance from the thralldom and judgment of this world is the blood shed by His Son on the cross. Man's end in this world is death: through the death of Christ is God's beginning for His people. Israel's "beginning of months" (xii. 2), their national birthday, occurred "in the land of Egypt" (ver. 1). When in this world and of it, when under its judgment, under its ruler, God, in grace, finds the sinner and gives him freedom. When still of the world, and under its sentence of judgment, we are brought out of it, and are redeemed to God.

God said to Israel, "When I see the blood, I will pass

over you" (xii. 13). Israel's security depended on what God saw and said. God did not look at the number of persons who might be in the house, but He looked at the blood outside. God did not look at the state of the persons who were sheltered by the blood, but at the blood which sheltered them. All ages of first-born sons were protected by the blood of the lamb, for the full-grown men and the babes equally needed the protecting blood, and all were equally safe under its protection.

The families fed on the lamb "roast with fire" (ver. 8), but it was not their feeding on the lamb in their houses, but the blood outside their doors that led the angel to pass over them. We are not redeemed on account of our communion with Christ, but because Christ died for us. True, they could not have eaten of the lamb, unless they had slain it for themselves; so no one can have communion respecting Christ suffering, unless he first really and truly in the heart receives Him as the Saviour: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." (John vi. 53.) The whole household, whether child or patriarch, ate of the lamb; and every one, young or old, who has received Christ is alike blessed with the highest blessings, for the Lord Jesus says, "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in Him" (ver. 56).

They ate the lamb with "unleavened bread and with bitter herbs"; but God looked neither at the unleavened bread nor the bitter herbs they ate when the destroyer passed that night through the land; God saw the blood.

Holiness becomes the redeemed soul. "Christ our

Passover is sacrificed for us : therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness ; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth " (1 Cor. v. 7, 8) ; and as we feed in our hearts on Christ, Who endured the fire of divine wrath for us, Who shed His precious blood, and Who died for us, we cannot do otherwise than banish leaven (evil) from our houses. Yet we are not redeemed by our holiness, but by Christ's blood.

The redeemed sinner cannot but eat his bitter herbs, as he thinks of his Redeemer's sufferings for him, for our sins slew Him, our iniquities were laid upon Him—yes, He bare our griefs and carried our sorrows, and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. Deep, deep sense of what our sins cost our Lord must ever accompany the feeding on His sufferings for us ; yet not the bitter herbs, but His blood is our ransom ; not our repentance, nor our sorrows, but Himself, is the price paid for our redemption.

Our security depends upon what God in His holiness and righteousness has to say concerning the precious blood of Christ. The Eternal, the Holy One, is glorified respecting sin by the death of Jesus. Honour and glory have been brought to God by the precious blood of the Son. How small are we, how poor our highest thoughts of the eternal redemption Christ has obtained.

God gave Israel one sign : " The blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are." (Ex. xii. 13.) It was a sign they could not see, for it was outside their houses. It was there for God, not for them, to look at. They shut their doors, and went not out of their houses until the morning (ver. 22). The seeking soul looks for a

sign, and God sets forth, "Christ Jesus . . . a propitiation through faith in His blood." (Rom. iii. 24, 25.) That blood none can see. It is an invisible sign. Unbelief looks for a token in the state of the soul, an experience of joy in the heart. Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us eighteen hundred years ago, and then God saw that blood, and now God declares for everyone who by faith receives His word, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

Israel's first free step was after the Passover. Then the doors of their houses were opened. They passed out of bonds into liberty under their blood-stained portals; above each head, at either side of every freed person, was the blood, as the people left Egypt's slavery for ever.

They left the land of bondage; Canaan was before them; Pharaoh's slaves had become the "hosts of the Lord." (Ex. xii. 41.)

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DIGRESSION CONTINUED.

Salvation, and Rejoicing in Hope.

"The Lord . . . is become my salvation."

"Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance."—Ex. xv. 2, 17.

WE must continue our digression through another chapter, before returning to the subjects opened up to us in the book of Joshua. Though free from judgment by having passed out of the land of bondage under their blood-stained lintels, Israel was by no means as yet in Canaan—indeed they were not yet out of Pharaoh's reach, nor delivered from his power.

In the deliverance of His people, Jehovah proved to them His strength in a peculiar way. All His wonders which they had seen in the land of Egypt had not taught them to sing, "The Lord is my strength." (Ex. xv. 2.) To sing this song, "the salvation of the Lord," must be known in the soul. However, before manifesting to Israel His strength, Jehovah made evident to Israel their own weakness. No one really knows the power of God's salvation until he knows himself as being "without strength," and God has His own way of

teaching believers this needful lesson. True, every believer has God for his salvation, though each one may not know in his soul the wondrous reality of it.

God taught Israel after this wise: He said to Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea." (Ex. xiv. 2.) They were thus hemmed in a valley, the sea in front of them, the enemy behind them. This emergency was pre-arranged by Jehovah to teach His people the never-to-be-forgotten lesson of His salvation, which they could not effectually learn save by realizing in themselves that they had no strength.

Thus encamped, Israel saw the dust of the enemy's approaching army rolling up, and they cried out in despair. To their eye their position meant certain death. The Red Sea lay before them like an open grave; Pharaoh and his host drew near to drive them to destruction. Their helplessness became the occasion for their learning the majesty of the God of their salvation. In their extremity the searching question was: "What could, or would, Jehovah do for them?" And so it is with us; reading about God and proving Him in the soul are widely different.

We listen to their cry "Because there were no graves in Egypt"—in that land, emphatically the land of graves—"hast Thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" (ver. 11). In this their terror, Israel presents a vivid picture of a soul, saved indeed by the precious blood of the Lamb of God, but suddenly brought by a sight of Satan's power to despair, and thereby to learn man's utter helplessness in the great question of salvation. Now God instructs

the trembling saint, as He did Israel, to trust in Himself; and teach this blessed lesson He will, yes, "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (ver. 14).

Israel did not dream of facing about and attacking Pharaoh, though they had come out of the land of Egypt "by their armies!" The first great principle in strength is gained when God's people know that in their helplessness the Lord fights for them. In Canaan, Israel were Jehovah's effective soldiers, but at the Egypt side of the Red Sea, God taught them their deliverance was not through the sword of the Captain of the Lord's host, but through Moses' outstretched rod. By the rod of judgment a pathway through death was made in God's sovereignty for them. Let no believer be disappointed because he does not all at once prove himself to be an efficient soldier for Christ. Rather let the concern be to get on day by day in the things of God, for thus He makes us apt soldiers for His Son Who is risen.

Israel, brought out of slavery, was about to go through what, to the human eye, appeared the grave itself, in order that they might truly know the strength and the salvation of God. The way of Jehovah for them from the enemy was the sea. Never in this world's history did men make a march so glorious and so wonderful! It was a wonder unheard of, that men should march right into the waves and then "go on dry ground through the midst of the sea" (ver. 16). And, as the fiery cloud "stood behind them," casting its brightness right and left on the walls of protecting water, and as the path rolled out before the advancing host, the glorious power of the Lord was visible to all His people. Jehovah's cleft pathway for His redeemed people was seen in the

beacon-light of the glory of His pillar of fire. That light was His standard, uplifted on behalf of His army. What a sight for our rapt, adoring admiration! It speaks to us of the way through death that Christ has made for us. This shining way, cut by the arm of Jehovah clean through the grave of waters, bright in His light, was the only path for His people out of the enemy's hand. And thus the Lord, who did not purpose that His people should yet "see war" (Ex. xiii. 17), ordered that they should see the strength of His right arm, and by that wondrous sight be constrained to sing, "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously."

"The children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel" (xiv. 29, 30). The believer is saved according to the perfect salvation of God, Who has "raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 24, 25); thus God has saved us. Christ's own blood has answered for our offences, and He Himself, raised from the dead, is the Witness that our sins have been atoned for. Christ risen has made for His people by His resurrection, the pathway through death. God has done the work for us; we are alive from the dead in Christ.

God has raised up His Christ out of death, and has established His people through His work in perfect security on the far side of death. Israel might say, in the language of figure, "Pharaoh's host has died, and we are alive from the dead, having gone through death by Jehovah's pathway." They passed through death

into life. They were buried, as it were, in the sea. And as we look back on the work of God for us, we own that we have been buried with Christ. Not only has Christ our Passover been slain for us, not only has He been our Substitute, but we have died with Him, and now we are "alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. vi. 11)—our risen Saviour.

"Christ died for our sins," but "if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. xv. 17); for then the weight of our sins would be still on Him, and in a dead Saviour there could be no salvation. But now is Christ risen from among the dead. "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously," the adverse powers are overthrown, "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power."

There is only one way of practical entrance into the blessing of this grace wherein we stand, this grace of absolute salvation and redemption, and that is by faith—faith in God, Who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. God's pathway of power for our feet is our treading by faith the very path He declares to be the one He has made for us. And He is surely leading many to take it by faith. There was only one way of going through the Red Sea, and that was by obeying the word of Jehovah—"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." The step of faith had to be taken, and as the word to move came, lo! the path God had made was seen: "Lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it." God has spoken to us; He has said, "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him," and "eternal life [is] in

Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vi. 9, 23.) Here is the divinely stated fact. Do we believe God? Each believer stands in the grace of this freedom, because the grace is of God. May faith in our God be established!

The joy of Jehovah's salvation filled Israel when they knew they were saved—it could not fill them before; and when by grace we believe God, we cannot but rejoice in His salvation and in Him our Saviour-God. As we by the Spirit consider this favour wherein we stand, so we are in spirit firmly established on the far side of death, as were Israel when across the Red Sea. We become, like them, a praising people, and look forward to the future—we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. v. 2.) Israel, when over the sea, looked upon the wilderness they had to traverse as already crossed; they sang their victories before their battles. In the joy of God's salvation they saw all their path accomplished in His strength, and they shouted, "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation" (Ex. xv. 13), while Miriam and the women answered with timbrels and dances. It was the grand chorus of a redeemed people, rejoicing in Jehovah's salvation.

Blessed praise-song! All of it concerns Jehovah, His mercy, His strength, His habitation; and this song is sung in spirit by God's people on earth this day, as His mercy, His redeeming love, and His power fill their hearts. Would that it were more boldly and openly sung, not by an isolated Christian here and there, but in full chorus by all the redeemed; is it not

written, "Shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart" ? (Psa. xxxii. 11.)

The early verses of the fifth of Romans are the words of our salvation-song. Standing in his sure place of favour divinely made, having access thereto by Christ Who died and rose again, the Christian not only rejoices in the hope of God's glory, but considers this lifetime, its difficulties and its trials, surveys the wilderness he must traverse, and triumphantly sings, "We glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

CHAPTER IX.

The Way into Canaan.

JOSH. iii. 9-17; iv.

"God . . . hath quickened us together with Christ."—EPH. ii. 4, 5.

"The exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places" (i. 19, 20).

WE now return to the passage of the Jordan. The Passover speaks of Christ as the slain Lamb, the passage of the Red Sea of the power of His resurrection, the ark entering Canaan through the dry bed of the empty Jordan proclaims His glory in ascension; and whether it be in death or in resurrection, each speaks of blessings resulting therefrom to His redeemed people. The Lord was about to magnify Joshua by the passage of the Jordan, and thereby to bring Israel into Canaan. They had their ears open to Joshua's commands, and their eyes intent on the movement of the ark. Let us consider both.

"Come hither," said Joshua to Israel, "and hear the words of the Lord your God." (Joshua iii. 9.) The "living" God was among them, and would without fail drive out the nations who held the goodly land flowing with milk and honey, and the sign was this—that when

the feet of the bearers of the ark of His covenant should touch the river, its waters would flee away.

The ark was declared to be His who is "the Lord of all the earth" (ver. 11), Jehovah thus expressing to His people His supreme power, His lordship and authority, where the heathen, who worshipped demons, had established themselves. After the Lord had risen from the dead, He said to His disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18); and this, His supremacy, should engage the heart, for His might and place in glory determine the heavenly position of His saints. And though the possession flows with precious things, it is God's way to make His people win those things practically in the strength of the Lord and in the power of His might.

Faith ever enters into, and acts upon, the divine word. Being bidden arise, Israel removed from their tents, and men of war, women and children, one and all fixed their eyes upon the ark. The blue mantle, covering the golden burden borne upon the shoulders of the white-robed priests, was visible to all. There was none other way into Canaan for the weak or the strong, save such as the ark should make. On rolled the Jordan, its waters deep and impetuous in the breadth of the April harvest-overflow, barring out the tens of thousands of Israel from the promised land. As the host descended from the higher ground towards the level of the river, to the right and to the left of them stretched the waters: but every eye was fixed on the ark, not on the broad waters running athwart its path. We look at Christ whom the ark figures, not on death, difficulties, or impossibilities.

The two thousand cubits were quickly traversed by the priests, that space occupied but a short time to cover, and then the moment appointed by Jehovah arrived—the moment fixed centuries before, for He had promised Canaan to the fathers. The feet of the priests touched the river's brim; and immediately the flow of its waters was arrested—Jordan's swift stream rolled back and rose upon a heap, very far away by the city of Adam.

Adam, "the city which is beside Zaretan," where the waters of the Descender were rolled back, is nowhere else mentioned in the Bible, and its site has not yet been discovered. But the significance of the name of this city is evident, for by Adam sin entered into the world and death by sin, and now in the power of Christ, the Ark, the swift-descending current of death has been rolled back, as it were, to the first man. Death came to us through Adam, life from Christ.

The waters of the impetuous Jordan failed, and were cut off when the ark entered the river. They swept on and were swallowed up in the Dead Sea, in the Sea of Death the waters of the river of death found their grave. They were not; Israel saw them not. In the most emphatic way, there was no Jordan for Israel that day, when the people, old and young, weak and strong, passed over into the promised land.

At the passage of the Red Sea, the waves fled before Israel; at the passage of the Jordan, the flood was driven back out of Israel's sight. In the one case a path opened out before them, and they marched between two walls of water; in the other no water was visible, but to the right and left of them, as far as the vision could

reach, a dry bed of the river. "What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?" (Psalm cxiv. 5.) The power of God was present—His rod and His ark—and thus the millions of Israel entered the promised land.

The many miles of the empty bed of the river, with the people hasting (iv. 10) over, seem to indicate that the passage was made in a very brief space of time, which by marching abreast, and in but a very few ranks, could very well be the case.

The Red Sea was God's way of power for bringing His people out from their slavery; the Jordan was His way of power for bringing them into the fulness of their blessings. In the one case, death, in figure, was passed through; in the other, death, in figure, was out of sight altogether. In the one case, resurrection power out of death is taught; in the other, Christ's passing through death, and His entry into heaven, and God's power in bringing the saints in Christ where Christ is.

The miracle was so wrought that that river, which is to all a familiar type of death, was banished from sight by the presence of the ark of the covenant of Jehovah. Now, when the soul is occupied with the second Man, the Lord from heaven, power from on high is granted, enabling the eye of faith to see the greatness of His work, His resurrection and His ascension glories, and the sight of Him prevents all barriers from being seen. The work of Christ for His people—the cross, the empty grave, the ascension on high, is one work, the benefits of which are for "all saints," and recognizing His ascension to heaven, the greatness of His work is apprehended. His place determines that of His people, who

are seated in Him where He is. He has borne the judgment upon the cross ; now He is risen, and in Him His people are a new creation.

We would say one to another, as Joshua said to Israel, "Come hither," look at Christ, see what He has done, and where He is. He went down into death, and God raised Him from the dead, and has set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. He is now above every principality, power, and dominion, all things being put under His feet. For who is He that ascended but He that descended first into the lower parts of the earth ? And He that descended is the same as He that ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things. (See Eph. i. 20, 22, and iv. 9, 10.)

"Come hither, and hear," He has gone down into death, He has touched death with His feet ; and by His death, death is thrust back for His people for ever. We look upon our ascended Lord, and exclaim, Truly there is no water in the Jordan for us.

Christianity arises out of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. The new creation is for us who are in Christ now in heaven. The way into the heavenlies—our Canaan—is through Christ risen from the dead and ascended on high.

"And the priests, that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan," Jordan's bed was dry for all Israel. The power which arrested the waters was effectual for the least as well as for the chief of the host. Israel and the ark were identical in their position in the bed of the river. Great and small, all the people went over in the strength of the ark. Blessed consideration for ourselves ! for it is not

by our strength, nor by our degree of faith, but of God, through whom in Christ we enter the heavenly places. Every single believer in Christ is blessed alike with heavenly privileges. Canaan belongs to each, and all "in Christ" are there, and solely on account of what Christ has done, and what He is. Christ stood firm for His people, and His people are secure in His strength. These things are not too good, or too great, to be true for the least and the weakest believer; they are the common inheritance of all saints, even as Canaan was the legitimate home of all Israel. And as Israel came up out of Jordan, and into Canaan, by the ark, so are believers now quickened together with Christ; they have life together with Him, who went into death for them and who has come up out of death.

The exceeding greatness of God's power to usward who believe has its measure according to the working of His own mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. The measure of the might is divine. By attempting to gauge this work by our faith, or feeling, or intelligence, we never lay hold of it. The measure is outside ourselves.

Israel crossed through the Red Sea during the night. Their crossing was presaged by night in their souls, by fear and trembling; but the glory of Jehovah turned their forebodings to shouts of triumph. They crossed over the empty bed of Jordan in the full light of day, and after three days of expectation and preparation. We read of no shouts of victory, no timbrels, no dances, accompanying this passage. A solemn stillness seems to pervade the host, as they see the ark go down for

them into the flood, and then behold the flood disappear. The spiritual instruction of the teachings of this part of our book are to be gained only by observing God's blessed Ark, Christ Jesus. When the soul is awakened as to its being in a world under wrath, God the Spirit makes sins to be felt; in the deliverance of the soul from legal bondage self has to be learned; but the heavenly things, new creation, life together with Christ risen from the dead, and blessings in Him in heaven, are learned only by looking on Christ who is risen from the dead and ascended to heaven.

Though there is no record of shouts of victory at the passage of the Jordan, the Christian has his theme of adoring praise for the heavenly favours of his God. These favours come not within the range of human ideas, they are new and divine, beyond and apart from man's thoughts or notions. We open the book characteristic of these blessings (the Epistle to the Ephesians) and sing this ceaseless song of praise, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. i. 3.)

And as the great work of the new creation is discovered to us, our state in fallen nature, that of being dead in trespasses and sins, is made plain. So long as we have any hope of improving ourselves by our good works, and regard ourselves, in any way, as under probation, we are unable to recognize what God shows us is our marvellous position seated in Christ in the heavenly places! The period of Israel's probation came to its close, and the forty years of their wanderings terminated at the passage of the Jordan. Jehovah showed His people a

new way, one which they had never before seen or traversed, and by the new way they entered Canaan. By the fact of Christ's death, the spiritually dead state of man in the flesh is demonstrated, "because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." (2 Cor. v. 14.) With Christ's death the time of human probation has ended, and now through the infinite grace of God believers are in Christ, where He is across the waters of death.

CHAPTER X.

The First Act in Canaan.

JOSHUA iv. 1-8; 10-13; 15-24.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”—EPH. i. 3.

BEFORE the Jordan was crossed, Jehovah had bidden Joshua select “twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man” (iii. 12), in readiness for an action to be performed after traversing its empty bed. God purposed that a definite witness should be made by Israel to His wonders, and commanded that all the people, representatively, should be prepared in view of the action He had planned. When all the people were “clean passed over” Jordan, Joshua was bidden carry out this divine purpose; “Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests’ feet stood firm, twelve stones; and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night.” Israel, by doing this, made acknowledgment through their representatives of what Jehovah had wrought for them. This action was performed, it must be borne in mind, when all of them were passed over into Canaan.

These stones proclaimed certain realities. Taken from the dry bed of the river, they declared God's power in cutting off the waters before the ark of His covenant; twelve in number, one stone for each tribe, they declared how that all Israel had entered into Canaan; set up together in Canaan, they witnessed to Israel's unity in that land. Moreover, they became a memorial to the nation of Jehovah's work for them.

First, these stones declared Jehovah's great work for His people; even Jordan emptied of its waters before the ark of His covenant, and His people brought thereby into the fulness of their blessing.

Now as we truly recognize that we are brought, in Christ, into the heavenly places, our first action in spirit will resemble that of Israel: we shall extol God for His power and might in accomplishing His purpose in bringing us into such blessing. And in order that this may be so, the apostle prays that we may have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him, that the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened, so that we may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe. Christ, our Ark, went down into death for us, exhausted its power, stripped it of its might; and God has given us, who were dead in sins, life "together with" Christ risen from among the dead, and has set us in Him in the fulness of blessing, so that as truly as Israel through the passage of the Jordan were in Canaan, saints now are in Christ in the heavenly places.

To enter into this grace, it is necessary to keep before our hearts, in faith, the measure of God's divine power exercised towards us; the exceeding greatness of which is according to that energy and might of His "which He

wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places " (Eph. i. 20.) And speaking in the language of the type under our consideration as "clean passed over" Jordan, the Christian's first act should be the heart recognition of what God has done. There should be the open acknowledgment that through the work of God all true Christians are seated in Christ Jesus in the heavenly places. (Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6.) And, while we acknowledge that we are in the heavenly places, let us attribute the blessing to Christ alone, who went down into death for us. We are across the River, to God through Christ be the praise.

Next, the stones, twelve in number, "according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel" (verses 5, 8), spoke of the whole of Israel. True, two and a half tribes had settled on the opposite side of the river and but nine and a half had entered Canaan proper, yet none the less were twelve stones taken from the place where, on behalf of all, the ark had rested. God did not ordain, that nine and a half stones should be set up in Canaan, and two and a half on the wilderness side of the river, according to Israel's attainment of possession, but He commanded the number that spoke of the whole nation to be set up, where, in His purpose, undivided Israel inherited, and encamped (chap. iv. 19, 20). His will was, that a testimony should be rendered to His purposes for all His people Israel.

As God's people enter into His thoughts about His purpose, actions result which tend to His glory. We see this in the case of Elijah who nobly testified to Israel's oneness even in the days of the nation's apostacy, for in the very presence of the priests of

Baal he built to Jehovah an altar of "twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob." (1 Kings xviii. 31.) The prophet recognized the divine purpose as regards Jehovah's people, even when their actual state was apparently desperate. And in a like spirit the apostle Paul, when before Agrippa, testified of the hope of Israel's "twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night" (Acts xxvi. 7), yet as he thus spake, ten of those tribes were scattered over the face of the earth, and two were guilty of the death of their Messiah! But the apostle's stand-point was faith in God's purpose.

Further, the type teaches that the stones taken up out of the depths of the river were to remind Israel how that through the ark of the covenant standing in the bed of the Jordan for them, they had entered the promised land. God would have His saints ever maintain in their hearts the remembrance of Christ's death. The believer has died with Christ; he is also risen with Him, and ever should he remember what the Lord underwent in dying for him. Therefore, as risen with Him, and as being by His death delivered from our old condition, let us in strength divinely given, in the power of the Spirit, place upon our shoulders our stone from the bed of the river, "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." (2 Cor. iv. 10.)

The stones set up together in Canaan were a monument to Israel's oneness, for their number was according to the *twelve* tribes—i.e., of Israel as a whole. Christians occupy themselves practically with spiritual, not national, unity, therefore with the truth that all saints of every nation are one in God's sight and accord-

ing to His purpose. Saints are seated together in the heavenly places in Christ, the one common place of blessing for all who believe. One association and one privilege mark all saints, and all equally have the highest and the best place. Even as each individual believer has life for himself "together" with Christ risen (Eph. ii. 5), so have all believers the highest privileges in common; they are by God made "to sit together" (v. 6).

The pillar of twelve stones, set up in Gilgal, became a memorial to the nation of Jehovah's work for them. The question, "What mean ye by these stones?" which the children would ask their fathers was to be answered by a relation of the Lord's doings: "The waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off." And well indeed may Christians recount to their children what God has wrought. Our little ones should be grounded in the great truths of God's word. Redemption, resurrection, and ascension facts should be implanted in their minds and memories.

The pillar of stones of witness from Jordan's bed has long since been cast down; but, in the days to come, Israel's oneness in Canaan shall be seen by the whole world. The Christian's pillar of witness is the word of God, and can never be removed. There stands the record that God's people are one family, one body. Upon that page is recorded indelibly the truth of all saints being one. Christ died, Christ rose again, Christ ascended to heaven; and for the honour and glory of His Name, God has made all His people on earth one. In Christ the many are but one. Whatever the former differences

were between Jew and Gentile, none are now recognized by God, but all saints are one in Christ: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) The stones of our witness declare the fact; and, by recounting the work of the Lord, the souls of God's people are lifted up to the fact. The soul is elevated by declaring what God has done, and what His purposes are.

Once the Gentiles were fenced off from the Jews, but now the middle wall of partition is broken down in the cross of Christ. Christ Himself, the peace of all saints, has made both Jew and Gentile one. In His own flesh, on the cross, Christ abolished the enmity. He has made the two, separate and naturally antagonistic, in Himself into the one new man. (Eph. ii. 11-22.) Let us go to the bed of the Jordan, where the feet that bare the ark of the covenant stood firm, and meditate upon God's ways. There is a wondrous power of uniting heart to heart in the consideration of Christ suffering for us all; in His making through His death His people into the one new man. Religious enmity, that awful element of dividing power, is slain, by the sight of Jesus dying alike for all.

God's people are all risen with Christ, one saint as much as another, and in speaking of "risen life" let us remember that the eternal life we each receive from Christ is received now from Him risen, and that all Christians have been quickened together by God with Christ. Again, all God's people are alike seated in Christ in heavenly places; there are not two platforms of blessings in Christ for saints but that one only, which is the highest and the greatest.

Beyond these things, the Holy Spirit of God, sent to

the earth by our ascended Lord, has united every saint to Christ, and further, has united each to the other, and has made all in Christ one body and all members one of the other, because all are members of Christ.

We recount what He has done and build our altar accordingly.

Whether some believers, like the two and a half tribes, settle down, in spirit, on the wilderness side of the river, or whether some, like the nine and a half tribes, make, in spirit, the heavenly Canaan their home, faith ever pitches the twelve stones in our Gilgal; for what Christ did in dying for us, He did for all saints. To allow for an instant that there is not "one body," would be to dishonour Christ who is the Head of the body; to assume that some saints are more of the One body than others, would be to deny the reality of the One body.

Any circle of interests, less than that of "all saints," is necessarily sectarian, such interests being confined to a part of God's whole. In what way then is practical oneness to be reached? What is the true power of unity amongst the members of the body of Christ? The Holy Spirit of God, who has formed all saints into the one body of Christ, has but one mind. He cannot think or act contrary to Himself. Let the Spirit of God dwell in twice ten thousand saints of every clime and nation, and of every natural temperament and mode of thought, still He is the One Spirit. However diversified His ways, unity must of necessity mark them all. His varied actions result from His one will. Our loyalty to the truth of the personality of the blessed Spirit of God demands of us adhesion to the fact that His mind is but one mind.

There are not two spirits in the body of Christ—"There is one body, and one Spirit" (Eph. iv. 4); and true, practical Christian union is of the Holy Spirit. He dwells in each believer, and, so far as each member of the body of Christ is subject to and guided by the Spirit, he keeps the unity of the Spirit with his fellow-believers. Each member of Christ should earnestly endeavour to maintain the one-mind of Him who dwells in the children of God, "giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Each believer is surely conscious of the existence in himself of self-will, and of there being in himself the germs of the various forms of insubjection to Christ, which tend to division in the camp, and to the separation of soldier from soldier; and, consequently, all should be more ready to blame themselves than others for the dishonour done to Christ's name by the divisions of God's people in Christendom. Were this the case, brighter hopes of unity might arise, for the principle whereby expressed unity is attained is a practical one. It lies in these words: "I, therefore . . ." (because all saints are one: compare Eph. iii. 1 and end of ch. ii. with ch. iv.) "beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (the calling by God of His heavenly people from Jews and Gentiles into one), "with all lowliness and meekness" (having the spirit of the Lord Jesus, who was meek and lowly of heart), "with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" (walking as Christ walked, thus being graciously disposed one towards another), earnestly "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Christlike character (lowliness and meekness) will produce Christlike behaviour one

towards another (longsuffering and forbearance in love); thus, in the mutual love, which is of God, in the uniting bond of peace, is the unity of the Spirit maintained. A holy state of soul, resemblance to Jesus Himself, and to His ways when on earth, alone is walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.

The unity of the Spirit of God, truly kept by God's people, is only to be arrived at by dependence of soul on God, day by day, hour by hour. If the Spirit of God be ungrieved in two saints, they will be keeping together the unity of the Spirit, and if two thousand act likewise they also will be doing so, and will be walking in obedience to the Scriptures. The world values appearances, and thinks much of uniformity, of regimental action, of the maintenance of a creed, or of terms agreed to and obeyed, affecting an outward unity; but, for the keeping of the unity of the Spirit of God, for the maintenance of the indivisible one-mindedness of the blessed One, who dwells in all saints, His unhindered action is necessary, and His action produces Christlike ways and obedience to the Scriptures. Conformity to the Spirit of Christ, or distance from it, marks our individual nearness to, or distance from, our keeping of the unity of the Spirit.

“What mean ye by these stones?” What mean ye by this mighty power of God in drying up the waters of Jordan before you, in the work of God in raising up Christ from the dead? Such questions will be best answered by the evidence of lives lived not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again. The stones stood in Gilgal, which was Israel's place of power; of this we shall speak in another chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

The Leader's Memorial and his Glory.

JOSHUA iv. 9, 14.

"Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.—Eph. iv. 9, 10.

JEHOVAH wrought "wonders" for Israel at the Jordan, both in the actual work performed, and in the hidden meaning of the work; hence in the type before us great things of God's mind are to be found.

"And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood, and they are there to this day." When the record was written, the swellings of Jordan had not swept away the leader's own memorial of the passage of the river's bed. Israel's memorial set up in Canaan was for all in the land of promise to see—"a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." Joshua's, reared in the bed of the river, was for no eye to behold when the waters were at their flood; but none the less a memorial for the leader himself. In the river we may justly say, his deepest feelings would centre; there, where the priests stood, the whole

burden of Israel's security was borne, and there the secret power of all Israel's blessing in entering Canaan lay.

Joshua in Canaan being a type of Christ, we have in this action a significant teaching. Our Lord never forgets the deep waters through which He passed—those sufferings in and unto death, by which He vanquished him that had the power of death—the devil—and by which He opened to His people their heavenly inheritance. From the throne on high He remembers the travail of His soul, His cross, its shame and agony. Jesus, whose work has brought the people of God into heavenly places, ever remembers the swellings of Jordan, the flood of deep waters where He, blessed be His Name, stood firm for us to bring us to His God and Father.

God's people are much occupied with their blessings, and indeed, of moral necessity, these must at first fill the heart; for until, by grace, it be known how the saints are blessed in the heavenly places in Christ, it is not possible to meditate upon the way our Lord has brought us into our blessings. Our stones of memorial tell us of Jordan's depths, and what Christ suffered for our sakes, and of our blessings; but let not His memorial be forgotten! His holy person in glory still bears the marks of the wounds of Calvary, and from heaven Jesus, speaking of His death, says to His people, "Remember Me."

The sacred memory of the place where His feet "stood firm" when the billows of God's wrath rolled over Him, should be present to the heart. True, He is no longer the sufferer, His sorrows are for ever passed, He is the ascended Son of Man, triumphant in His victory

over death ; but for ever shall memories of His death fill the hearts of His people—eternally shall it be said of the Lord's "stones of witness," "They are there unto this day."

Jehovah magnified Joshua by the passage of the Jordan, and thereby obtained for him the leadership in Israel's eyes. "On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel ; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life."

The present exaltation and place of the Lord Jesus as Man is of His God and Father, and His glories and exaltation are the blessed answer to His sufferings and humiliation. "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth ? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." (Eph. iv. 9, 10.) The Lord Jesus, the Son of Man, who went down to the lowest depths, occupies the highest height in heaven ; and there He bears in His person the solemn witness to Calvary. Because of His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name. (Phil. ii.) He has been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and God the Father has set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. (Eph. i.) As this exaltation of the Lord is apprehended, He becomes indeed the Leader to His people, and is magnified by them.

The Lord is not fully honoured by His people until His present glory be recognized. In the light of His present exaltation as a man, on the life side of death, His glory as the Lord who died is seen. He, the risen and ascended Christ, is the Firstborn from among the dead, the Head over all things, the Head of His body the church; and the more the heart apprehends Him thus, the more all that He did in dying for us is remembered.

The heavenly Leader is before His people in the teachings of the book before us. Even in earthly matters a leader's influence over his followers is proportionate to the honour in which they hold him. Now Christ is in heaven and in glory, and as His greatness and majesty, His strength and power, are apprehended by faith, a mighty influence is exercised over the souls and lives of His people. His position in glory, His victory determine the blessing of the redeemed; the fulness of the blessing of the members is determined by the glory of the Head. His honour, and their blessing are not to be separated. Our heavenly position in Christ is exclusively of divine grace, but it is ours in Christ on high. Now indeed it is a subject for faith, but soon it will be displayed in glory, and that display will be seen to be to the honour of our exalted Saviour, Jesus Christ the Lord.

CHAPTER XII.

Separation to God.

JOSHUA v. 2-9.

“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”—
JOHN xvii. 16.

CIRCUMCISION is a sign in God's people that they are indeed His, separated to Himself according to His purpose. To the father of the faithful it was a token of the covenant God had made with him. (Gen. xvii. 11.) The Lord's words, “My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant” (ver. 13), included the whole generation of His people of old. Circumcision indicated that Israel were separated to Himself from the nations around them. The Christian is separated to God in Christ, who is risen from the dead, and who dwells not on earth, but in heaven. The circumcision made without hands, “that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter” (Rom. ii. 29), has now supplanted the carnal ordinance.

“The circumcision in the flesh made by hands” (Eph. ii. 11) is now simply Judaism, and to go back in spirit to Judaism is really to reject the cross of Christ. That cross has written for ever the sentence of death on

man in the flesh (2 Cor. v. 14), and shown that man in Adam can never recover himself so as to satisfy or to please God. The Christian, therefore, glories not in law-keeping, nor in his doings, nor in what he is—good, bad, or indifferent; he glories not in his flesh (Gal. vi. 13), nay, he repudiates the notion of making himself fit for God by works or attainments, saying, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (vi. 14). All efforts to make self fit for God are the practical rejection of the cross of Christ, and are but boasts in the flesh which God has condemned through the cross of Christ. In the flesh man, whether Jew or Gentile, in circumcision or in uncircumcision, is adjudged by God as past recovery; in Christ, who is risen from the dead, there is new creation; hence, neither circumcision is anything, nor uncircumcision (ver. 15).

Israel—speaking of the people as a nation—were circumcised in Egypt; they were God’s people in that land, with the token upon them of His covenant: “All the people that came out were circumcised.” But Israel, wandering in the wilderness, were an uncircumcised people: “The people that were born in the wilderness by the way, as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.” In the wilderness, the nation as a whole for nearly forty years neglected the rite, and did not maintain the appointed sign of separation to God from the heathen. Yet we read of no call from Jehovah for the maintenance of the ordinance so long as they were in the wilderness; a fact which, when we consider what the private history of Moses was, and what were God’s dealings with him

in reference to his neglect of circumcision in his family (Ex. iv. 24, 25), is remarkable. Now why was this? God had promised to bring Israel into the possession; but they refused to accredit God in His covenant to the fathers. In Israel's unbelief we may find the reason why they were incapacitated for bearing upon themselves the token of their being Jehovah's nation. Unbelief in God's word of grace and true separation to God cannot co-exist in the souls of men. Israel did not believe God would bring them into the land, "which the Lord swore unto their fathers that He would give them;" their wanderings were consequent upon their unbelief, and the sign of their being the people of God was not demanded of them during their wilderness way.

The great principle, that God's grace to us is the practical power of our severance from the world, is of the last importance. The true spirit of living to God results from communion with God. The more His favours are enjoyed, the more His people are marked from the world. The effort to become holy in our own strength is but a mockery of divine grace towards us. That kind of separation from the surrounding things of earth, which is practised in order to reach holiness toward God, is but stripping the crab-tree of its leaves in order to change its nature. No amount of trying to be holy, by giving up the world, will alter our evil nature, and the seeker after holiness, who by these means thinks he has ripened to his desires, has merely brought forth the fruit of spiritual pride. True circumcision of heart is the outcome of a gracious sense of divine favour towards the saints of God.

Since Israel was brought into the promised land, the

Lord would not permit that they should be in their possession, and yet remain in themselves as the heathen; hence, Jehovah's drying up of the waters of Jordan before the children of Israel and His call for their circumcision a second time, were events morally connected with each other. He required the sign of His covenant in them, and that they should bear in themselves the witness of being His nation, separated to Him from the idolaters surrounding them.

"By the way"—that is, in the wilderness, the doubting, the tempting period of Israel's history—God made no call upon them for circumcision; but, His word being fulfilled before their eyes, they themselves being the witnesses of His faithfulness, the land of promise being entered, "at that time" forthwith He required it of them. The grace God had wrought for them, and the favour into which He had brought them, changed His mode of acting toward them.

Naturally, man looks, in his religious expectations, to severing this and that evil thing from himself, and thereby to making himself fit for God's service. But *in Christ, in whom we are complete*, we are also circumcised, and by nothing less than the putting off the body of the flesh itself! Not by the stripping off of this or of that evil propensity, but by the stripping off of the body of the flesh itself.

In the Epistle to the Colossians (chap. ii. 10-12) what the Jewish ordinance of circumcision and the Christian ordinance of baptism signify to the Christian are stated, "Ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circum-

cised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body* of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." The circumcision of Moses signified Israel's separation to God from the heathen; the circumcision of Christ signifies the putting off of the believer's old man, and his being absolutely separated to God in Christ risen from the dead. Now it must never be forgotten that it is in Christ we are circumcised, and not in our own strength; also, that the work is exclusively a spiritual one, for it is "made without hands"; and further, that it is a divine work in contrast with all that is human. No hand of man could effect that separation to God in His saints from the former things which is wrought by the death and the burial of Christ, for it is nothing short of their spiritual death and their burial, with Him. By none other than divine agency could the old man, the body of our flesh, be put off from God's sight, and by none other means than that of Christ's death. Our faith rejoices in this truth.

God speaks of His saints as complete, filled full, in Christ who is exalted above all, before their circumcision in Christ is mentioned. The completeness is absolute—no single thing can be added thereto, and neither man nor angel can advance it.

We are in Christ across the Jordan, in Canaan, in the heavenlies. In Christ we are circumcised—the body of the flesh put off. Circumcision, as a divine fact for

* "Of the sins of" is a reading generally rejected. See R. V., &c.

us in Christ, is the common portion of all Christians, for all are in Christ—dead with Him, risen with Him; circumcision, as a practical result of God's grace towards us, is the mortification of our members which are on earth, and thus regarded is our place of strength.

What bitterness possesses many of God's dear people through vainly attempting to destroy the flesh in themselves! Whether such energies result in afflicting the body to purge out the evil desire, or in torturing the soul to destroy the principle of sin—the flesh; the whole effort is simply self seeking to master self. "The flesh profiteth nothing." (John vi. 63.) "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 3.)

As the circumcision at Gilgal was the common privilege of the nation of Israel, so all Christians are the circumcision. But none the less is there also the practical side of the privilege. Having been circumcised in Christ, and the body of the flesh having thus been put off by God, we are to put to death our members which are on earth—"mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Col. iii. 5) "seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man" (ver. 9, 10). Naturally we take pleasure in giving rein to our passions, tempers, desires; to put them to death, to refuse our wishes their own way, to deny our will, is no painless exercise. "Mortify therefore" is a word which comes home to us all—a word which is as a "sharp knife" to us every day we live on earth.

"The Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp

knives." We are now speaking of practical daily life, and the only Circumciser of our hearts is Christ, who accomplishes, by the Spirit, in His people true and actual separation of heart and mind to God. Christ has passed out of this world, He is risen from the dead, He is the true Joshua. From heaven, where He is, He separates His people from the world to His God and Father. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John xvii. 14), are His words.

Perhaps the truest example of practical circumcision is that of the apostle. His life was a long self-sacrifice, a constant denial of self; the death of Jesus he bore about continually in his every-day life, and thus the life of Jesus on earth was manifest in His servant, for the pattern of the ways and steps of the blessed Master were seen in him.

Our power for mortifying our members, which are upon the earth, is the indwelling Spirit of God; "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. viii. 13.) Self must be kept out of sight, and faith takes the place of human will and energy in following the path of separation to God. Christ and the Spirit are our strength.

God puts before His people as the means for mortifying their members simply the death of Christ. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. iv. 10), is a word which should be graven in our hearts. We cannot prune off our passions or our tempers, or remove from our hearts our besetting sin by resolutions, efforts, or penances;

but when by faith we apply the death of Jesus to our daily lives, and in love to Him bear that about in our bodies, we are able to put to death our evil ways. And then, when the darkness is cast out, what Jesus was on earth, in some degree shines out in our poor mortal bodies—His life is seen in us.

Israel—a circumcised people in the camp at Gilgal—were witnesses to human powerlessness in the midst of foes. In themselves there was no strength to overcome; but at the moment of their weakness, the terror of the Lord was on their enemies. Our strength in the presence of the enemy, Satan, and in the midst of spiritual wickedness is the power of the Lord's might; for when we are weak, then are we strong.

Very practical instruction is presented to us in these words, "all the people that came out of Egypt . . . even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. Now all the people that came out were circumcised . . . The children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed . . . and their children, whom He raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised" (Josh. v. 4-7).

The men of war that came out of Egypt were not such as God could use in Canaan under Joshua. One by one, for forty years, slowly but surely, they fell in the wilderness, till at length all of these were consumed. The Christian knows full well in his soul the spiritual meaning of this. The energy he brought up out of Egypt, such men of war, as natural strength, worldly position, and the like, do not aid the spiritual work of

God. Slowly these energies are consumed, and these men of war fall in the wilderness as slowly we learn to trust wholly in God for strength. One by one they go, as by degrees we learn to follow the leadership of our risen Lord. The consuming process by which self-strength, world-strength, and such "Men of war" gradually fall by the way, is often bitter and painful. The chastening hand consumes, yet that very hand is likewise a hand of blessing, for God, while cutting off the old, raises up "in their stead" the new; while writing the sentence of death on our old powers, He is raising up in the place of discipline and self-learning, new activities in us, which owe their whole strength to Him. Where we find, growing less and less, the power we thought was in ourselves, the power of Christ is becoming manifest. How frequently do we see this process worked out in the lives of Christians, indeed much of Christian life is this experience. "Whom He raised up in their stead," is then a most cheering word. Prayer, waiting upon God, patience, the spirit of faith, the receptive spirit that obtains divine guidance, the eye that sees God's ways, the energy of the Holy Spirit in us; these are "men of war" that came not out of Egypt, and it is before them that Satan's strongholds fall. And since such is the case, as the lives of God's people witness, we can well understand why it was that after victory and defeat Israel, when under Joshua's leadership, repaired to Gilgal. Every day the soldiers of our Lord in heaven need to repair to the cross, and to be bearing about in their bodies the dying of Jesus.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Place of Power.

JOSHUA v. 9.

“Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”—GAL. ii. 20.

GILGAL, which signifies “Rolling,” or “Rolling away,” is Israel’s centre of strength all through the conflicts recorded in the book of Joshua. To Gilgal they repaired, whether after victory or defeat, and from this camp they issued forth to battle.

At their circumcision “the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal, ‘Rolling away,’ unto this day.” It might, perhaps, have been expected that God would have declared Israel free from the reproach of Egypt after He had cast their enemies into the depths of the sea, or immediately upon His bringing them over Jordan into Canaan; but no, He required them to be circumcised first.

At Gilgal Jehovah Himself rolled the reproach away, and Israel stood before Him in the blessing wherewith He had blessed them. Pharaoh had said that, if they did get out of Egypt, they would be shut in the wilder-

ness; and verily it had seemed as if they would wander and die there. In the camp in Canaan they were before Jehovah His army, His nation on the earth, according to His accomplished purpose, His purchased people seated in His promised land, and marked off by Him for Himself from the nations surrounding them; and He declared them to be His indeed.

At our camp we see what God has wrought; and with God's work before us, we are established in His grace, which is in itself the prime element of Christian strength. God has accomplished His purpose towards His redeemed in Christ, and has planted them, who were of the land of bondage, in the heavenly places in Christ. He has removed from them, through Christ, every single thing His eye saw contrary to His own mind in them, for His people are *dead* with Christ; and He has made them in Christ exactly in accordance with His mind, for they are *risen* with Christ, seated in Christ on high; and this is the camp—the place of strength for the Christian. In whatever way the world be viewed, or in whatever way the flesh, as the principle of evil, be regarded, in Christ who is risen from the dead, in Christ who has gone up on high, the reproach is rolled off God's redeemed people by God Himself. He Himself pronounces them free, for it was not what Israel said of themselves, but what Jehovah declared respecting them, that rendered Gilgal—the camp—their centre of power.

It was at Gilgal the twelve stones from the bed of the Jordan were pitched for the memorial, which declared not only the divine power which had arrested the river, but which reminded Israel of the depths wherein the ark of the covenant had stood for them.

And here it is, in spirit, that the true practical spirit of circumcision is carried out by God's saints; true mortification of self is found where there is true heart-dwelling in the memory of Jesus' death. As Israel beheld these memorial stones, they would of necessity consider the place where the ark had been for them. And abiding in the memory of Christ's death for us, we, being risen with Christ, are, practically speaking, in the place of power, for we cannot overcome the foe for God unless we ourselves be in subjection to Him. The believer knows well enough that though he be seated in the heavenly places in Christ, yet unless he mortify his members which are on the earth, he has no practical power for his daily life. The knowledge of our death with Christ and our mortifying of our desires cannot be disassociated in practical life. We are not in the Jordan, we are taken out of it; but the memory of Christ's death for us need be ever in our hearts if we would live truly for Him. A saint may know his position in Christ from the Scriptures, yet be living a very untoward life as a Christian. But such would not be the case if his heart was occupied with Christ's death for him, by which his sins were put away, and in whom he is raised to the new life. The apostle says, "the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. xx.); ever was the memory of Jesus' dying love before his soul. As our hearts gaze, as it were, upon the memorial stones, we say to ourselves, He went into death for us; we died with Him; and then, by the power of the Holy Ghost, we are enabled to put to death our pride and our ways which once we loved.

Two great memories mark the camp of Gilgal: the twelve stones taken from the bed of Jordan, the memorial of God's work in bringing them into the promised possession, and of the place where the ark stood firm; and the circumcision, the witness that nationally they were absolutely Jehovah's own people. The teachings of these two figures give precisely the two great elements of blessing, abiding in the faith of which is strength. First, in Christ ascended, the Christian is brought into all the privileges of all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places; second, by identification with Christ in His death, the Christian is, as a fallen child of Adam, dead and buried and out of sight before God.

The camp was for all Israel—not for the men of war only, not for the nine and a half tribes only; there was but one camp, with its memorial stones and its circumcision; and, as we contemplate our camp, we rejoice that its mighty realities are for “all saints,” all of whom are “blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ,” and all of whom are “dead with Christ.” Whether our individual faith rises to God's thoughts of our Gilgal is another question; nevertheless, as the camp, the place of strength, possesses the believer's soul, so does he make it his resort, whether before victory or after defeat.

From the stronghold of divine grace the Christian soldier needs to be continually going forth, and hither he needs to be continually returning; the twelve stones, and the circumcision made without hands, must ever be before his soul; he needs to be again and again strengthened for his warfare by the faith of the truth of

his being a member of the body of Christ, and by the faith of the truth that he has been crucified with Christ.

The effective soldier of Christ is girded about with divine realities, he is braced up in heart by God's word as to what real blessing is, and his energy for warfare lies in being in the Spirit as to the truth. Power of darkness and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places are the foes, and, dwelling in heart in the faith of being blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ, we fight the enemy in the field he occupies. To slacken the girdle is to give Satan an advantage. Do we give up a single truth God has given us? or, Do we fail in practically putting our own desires to death?—then, by that surrender, spiritual strength departs and courage fails.

CHAPTER XIV.

Keeping the Feast.

JOSHUA v. 10.

“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”—1 COR. v. 7, 8.

IN God's ways there is neither chance nor accident. Exactly forty years before the children of Israel encamped at Gilgal they were slaves in Egypt. God had so arranged their journeys, and the date of their entrance into the promised land, that the first feast kept there was the remembrance of their deliverance. “The children of Israel encamped at Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.”

The passover and “the feast of the passover” are distinct. One is the deliverance itself, which was wrought in Egypt, and the other is the memorial of the deliverance. There was but one passover; while the feast of the passover was annual. The passover was once for all; the feast of it, as frequent as the years of freedom. Christ's blood has been shed once and for ever, and our

redemption by His precious blood is complete, but the memorial, the feast of remembrance, is continuous.

In the passover, Israel were occupied with their expected escape; in the feast, rejoicing in obtained freedom, they meditated upon the means by which God had brought them out of bondage. The very attitude of the partakers of the passover itself differed from that of those who partook of the feast. In the former case, they ate standing, with loins girded ready for departure, with shoes on their feet and staff in hand, and in haste; in the latter, they ate at leisure, reclining, with all outward indication of being at rest, and of being blessed in fulfilled promises. They were in the land, and their hopes were realized, and with joy they partook of their portion. The character given to the feast of the passover was emphatically that of a redeemed people in the enjoyment of their rest. Such at least was the character of the feast, according to the custom of Israel in Canaan in later times; and we may well learn our lesson therefrom.

There was no destroying angel from whom protection was needed, no sprinkling with blood of door-posts and lintel, for that work had been done once for all, no thought of being redeemed in the future, or of redemption being a progressive work in accomplishment; but instead, there was the enjoyment of the blessing of being in the land of promise by virtue of an accomplished redemption. Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast, and let us keep it as becomes those who are in the fulness of the blessing in Christ in the heavenly places.

Previous to keeping the feast in the plains of Jericho,

Israel had kept it in the second year of their wilderness wanderings, "they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel." (Numbers ix.5.) This was the only passover mentioned in the wilderness; of none other is there any record. And, indeed, when we consider the constant unbelief of the people, we are not surprised, for of what moral value would a memorial of deliverance be, if that deliverance were doubted? A deliverance from one form of death to another would be a mockery; but deliverance from Egypt, in order that they should be slain in the wilderness, was, according to Israel's murmurings, that which Jehovah had wrought for His people.

We cannot remember that which to us is not known. We cannot remember Christ in His death for us, unless we know that He died for us. If we are doubting that He died for us, and questioning the benefits of His death, remembrance of Him, and keeping the feast, are impossible. Israel disbelieved God, they said He could not bring them into Canaan. Had such been the case, the passover in Egypt would have been ineffectual, for He brought them out of Egypt in order to bring them into Canaan, even as the song at the Red Sea witnessed, "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation." (Ex. xv. 13.) Hence with their unbelief upon them, Israel could not keep the feast; and they did not do so until in Canaan, where their unbelief as to being brought home was dispelled by being at home.

A believer who merely believes that the blood of

Christ has redeemed him from the world, and stops there, saying, "I shall never get to glory," or "I shall require a fresh passover in order to do so," is questioning the value of the blood of Christ, and the efficacy of the offering once offered, and the mighty result of that work. Christ "died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God," not that we might perish by the way.

In the passover kept in the wilderness, and in the passover kept in Canaan, we have a twofold witness to our joy in Christ, whose blood has redeemed us. We can say, "We are redeemed from wrath and shall reach glory," or, "We are blessed with all spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." God's love is the source, and the precious blood the foundation, of our every good. Whichever way we regard ourselves, either as in the wilderness or as in the heavenly places, our feast is the love of Christ in dying for us. His death is, and ever will be, the opening of our songs of praise.

His sacrifice is the basis of every blessing. God laid the foundation in love, and the love that led Jesus to the cross is the spring of the song of redemption. Brought consciously into, and happily experiencing through the Spirit the fulness of blessing in Christ, the first and eternal occupation of our hearts is the love of Christ.

Viewing ourselves in the position presented by the part of the Book of Joshua which is before us, we are in the presence of our enemies in the plains of Jericho, and conflict for the risen Christ is before us. Now our vigour of soul arises from the sense of the love of the Lord Jesus in His dying for us. The more Spirit-

taught we are as to the truth of God respecting our heavenly blessing in Christ, the more deeply shall we value His death for us. Thus the feast of the passover is the first feast in Canaan in every sense. It is first, and it is everlasting. It comes first in the soul of the saint, and it should ever be the feast of his soul. Israel's entrance into Canaan, being timed by Jehovah on the fourteenth day of Abib, in order that they might keep the passover in the land on that evening, appeals to us to delight more and more in our redemption and our Redeemer. In truly keeping this feast lies our preparedness of soul for going up against Jericho. May feasting on Christ's dying love be the portion of us all.

CHAPTER XV.

The Food of the Land.

JOSHUA v. 11.

“I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”—GAL. ii. 20.

ON Israel's exodus from Egypt, the Lord had commanded, in reference to the passover and its commemoration, “Remember this day . . . there shall no leavened bread be eaten. . . . When the Lord shall bring thee into the land . . . a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.” (Ex. xiii. 3-7.) Thus, unleavened bread and the feast of the passover were intimately associated.

Leaven is in itself decay, and ever in Scripture an emblem of corruption. The Christian is thus exhorted: “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the un-

leavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. v. 7, 8.) As unleavened bread was the accompaniment of the passover feast, so is holiness the companion of dwelling in loving remembrance on Christ's death. Let our individual apprehension of His sufferings, and of the effect of them be ever so varied, no one can truly keep the feast and at the same time regard iniquity in his heart.

The old leaven of the gross sins of our unconverted days, and the more subtle sin of malice and wickedness that creeps even into the Christian's soul, must be purged out of the heart as the Jews purged out leaven from their houses. They searched for it high and low, and in like manner, spiritually speaking, we need to search and examine ourselves, for "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (1 Cor. v. 6.) Evil is an active principle corrupting continually; and, whether in our own breasts, or whether in our mutual associations as Christians, evil, when allowed to remain, must corrupt the whole association. A spot of decay in an apple will corrupt the whole, and thus does evil spread through that which is sound till the whole becomes corruption. Soundness does not change decay into health, but throws it off, and we are bidden purge out evil.

Literal leaven is easily sought, found, and cast away; to deal with that which it signifies, an eye of spiritual discernment, an honest heart for God, and holy zeal, which, at all cost, puts His great Name first, are requisite. Examining cupboards and corners for leaven, or exterior purification, is a work any one can engage in; but too few are they who are willing to examine themselves and search their own hearts in the light of God's word.

The accompaniments of the feast are sincerity and truth; and if we are careful to have these, the way of dealing with evil will be simple. Moreover, by the consideration of positive good, we are best fitted to meet evil. A false thing in the heart of him who would keep the holy feast of the remembrance of Christ's death is leaven. If the soul be sincere, the more the light shines upon its motives the purer the motives are proved to be. We cannot attain to sinlessness, but we can attain to sincerity, and be honest before God and man. Truth will not be far off when sincerity is present; truth reaches down into the depths of a man's being, and truth and the love of it cannot be separated. We cannot deceive God, but we may deceive one another; and if we omit the accompaniments of sincerity and truth, the feast in mutual love of the remembrance of Christ's death cannot be truly kept by us, as Israel could not keep the feast of their passover without partaking of the unleavened bread prescribed by Jehovah.

Let us also remember that ours is a perpetual celebration of the feast. We do not limit it to the moment we may be partaking of the memorials of Christ's death, nor to the hour when we may be engaged in public religious service. Israel's feast of unleavened bread was of seven days' duration, as if to teach us that the full week of our lives on earth is to be a keeping of the feast of our passover with sincerity and truth.

For the observing of the passover in Gilgal, unleavened cakes made of the corn of the land are spoken of. This was absolutely a new thing in Israel's history, for until in Canaan they could not partake of its har-

vest. They had entered the land at "the time of harvest" (Josh. iii. 15), and the Lord gave them Canaan's food for their portion in the feast of unleavened bread—cakes baked in the fire, and parched corn.

The corn (rendered "old" corn) of the land was the produce of Canaan, the fruit of the harvest just ripe, not necessarily old corn stored anterior to the harvest. The day after the sheaf of the first-fruits was presented to the Lord (Lev. xxiii. 9-14), this food became Israel's—"When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof"—a harvest they had neither ploughed nor sown, and which aptly figures our resurrection-blessings—"ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God." The first-fruits had to be waved before the Lord, then the harvest became the people's, teaching us that our joy in our harvest of blessings in Christ risen, can only be spiritually fed upon, when Christ Himself has the pre-eminence in our thoughts. Christ first, then the fruits of the harvest for ourselves, is the divine order, and if we make our blessings the prime occupation of our souls and Christ the second, we shall grow self-occupied and weakness of spirit will ensue. Let us not forget this; for some become so occupied with their blessings as to neglect Christ from whom the blessings come.

"That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die" (1 Cor. xv. 36), and the corn of the land that Israel ate, speaks to us of Christ risen from among the dead, and all the harvest of heavenly blessings in Him, which through grace are our portion. In the order of the verses before us, we see, in type, how God keeps

Christ Himself before our souls, and how He has allied together the death and the resurrection of His Son for our soul's food. The passover came first, the next day came the feast of unleavened bread, and on the third, the day after the Sabbath, the feast of the first fruits. In the "feasts of the Lord," the first types presented to us are those of Rest through the blood of the Lamb, Holiness which becomes His house for ever, and the Resurrection of Christ.

Led now by God into the fulness of Christian blessing in Christ—across the Jordan—in the land—God's own free people—what have we before us? Christ Himself, the food of His people—Christ Himself, now risen from the dead! Let us, then, seek to have Him ever before our souls, and to feed continually upon Him, to remember Him in His dying love, and to know Himself alive to die no more. Let us not forget that leaven can never be mingled with Christ, the food of the believer's affections, and that holiness and truth cannot be separated from communion with Christ.

Feeding upon Christ Himself is a personal act. None can do this for another; we may learn about Christ from one another, we must feed on Him for ourselves; and precisely as we have communion with Him, our souls increase in true strength. According to our appetite for Christ Himself will be our spiritual force for Him in this world. We do not require superior wisdom to have our hearts occupied with Christ; the little children, as well as the men of war in Israel, ate the corn of the land; it is not knowledge, but love, that brings about a healthy spiritual state of soul.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Manna.

"And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land ; neither had the children of Israel manna any more ; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year."—JOSH. v. 12.

"....He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me. This is that bread which came down from heaven."—JOHN vi. 57, 58.

MANNA was the food of Israel in the wilderness. It was the divine provision for them for the term of their wanderings—"The children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited ; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan." (Ex. xvi. 35.) It fell morning by morning, and they gathered early, and according to their eating. It was found where had been the dew of heaven that fell around the camp—"when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing" (ver. 14). The barren wilderness received upon its face the dew, and where the moisture, collecting invisibly and falling from above, lodged upon the ground, God spread the angel's food for man—"He gave them bread from heaven to eat." The Spirit of God, through whom Christ is presented to us, and Christ

our food, are thus before us. "The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven" (John vi. 33), and we find Him, we may say, where the Holy Spirit presents Him to us. The Christian's food, as he traverses this wilderness, is not of the earth, but from and of heaven. Our spiritual sustenance here is to be gathered diligently day by day, early in the morning before the sun is up, and the day of our toil is upon us.

In the wilderness Israel gathered the manna according to their several needs. Jehovah provided for them according to the measure of their requirements. Thus, too, do we receive of Christ. We hunger, and find Christ to supply our daily wants, and ever the diligent hand, the early seeker, receives a peculiar blessing. "They gathered, some more, some less;" they gathered, not according to the abundance of the divine supply, but "every man according to his eating" (Ex. xvi. 17, 18). How true is this principle regarding soul-hunger, for what different appetites for heavenly things have God's people! Some find half an hour over the Bible a long time; others meditate therein day and night. Yet while this is so of us, when all the gathered manna was measured, it was "an omer for every man"—every man had sufficient, every man's need was absolutely met, for the measure was the satisfaction of every man.

In Canaan Israel ate the corn of the land, the native food of Canaan—the exhaustless supply, as we may express ourselves, of the promised possession. The corn of the land, like the manna for the wilderness, is a figure to us of Christ, the food of His people; but in the corn we have the abiding supply of heaven itself before us, Christ risen from the dead, and for the

measure of the supply, not the need of a hungering saint on earth, but Himself in His exhaustless fulness. In the four gospels we see Christ as the manna, Jesus on earth, and walking among men; in those Scriptures which present Him as the glorified and ascended Son of God, we see Him as the corn of the land. Ever and always the same Jesus, but in the one case coming down to our need, in the other in the glory of God.

The measure of the manna that fell in the wilderness was according to the daily need of Israel; day by day there was enough for every one of all the host, and not one single soul was forgotten in the divine reckoning. God, in His loving care, counted His people, and provided exactly every morning for them according to their numbers. Most cheering is this consideration. Every single saint on earth, whatever his soul-hunger, has only to go to Christ; little children, aged believers—all have this gracious word, “He that cometh to Me shall never hunger.” (John vi. 35.) The measure of the corn in Canaan was the abundance of the land itself—the honey, the wheat, the oil and wine, all that Canaan produced. As we apprehend what Christ is in Himself as the corn of the land, our souls enter into a wealth of immeasurable blessing and fulness. His fulness, not our need, is thus before our souls. Christ, as risen from the dead, is our portion. Let us seek to know Him as He is, and the more of Him we lay hold of, the more we shall say there is to be laid hold of; His glories, His grace, His love, are exhaustless.

Apprehending Christ as the corn of the land, and feeding on Him in His exhaustless fulness, will in no way deprive us of zeal in searching for Him daily for

our ever-recurring need. Though the manna ceased for Israel when they ate of the corn of Canaan, the manna ceases not for us so long as we are on earth. We need Him every day and every hour, and as much at the end as at the beginning of our journey. We are spiritually both in the wilderness and in Canaan; we are partakers on earth of the heavenly calling, and we are seated in Christ in the heavenly places. The enjoyment of the favours of God to us, in the heavenly places in Christ, enhances the sense of His favours to us as in the wilderness. Grace never displaces grace, nor does one divine favour militate against another; all God's ways are perfect, and every token of His grace adds lustre to that grace. A believer setting up one glory of the favour of God against another, is like a man beholding the full displayed glories of the heavens above him on a clear night, and despising the beauties of some stars because they differ from others in glory.

For a few days Israel had the food of the wilderness in Canaan, but the harvest enjoyed by them, the manna ceased. When we reach glory we shall not need the present daily supply of grace, for we shall be with Christ. We shall see Him as He is. We shall apprehend Him in heaven. Exhaustless blessing will be ours for ever. His fulness will be our endless portion; we shall ever be satisfied, and we shall ever find our joy in Him.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Captain of the Host of the Lord.

"And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host, said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."—JOSH. v. 13-15.

"Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in. And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him."—JOSH. vi. 1-5.

"Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword."—REV. i. 16.

WE cannot regard Joshua, since he was not always free from mistakes, as in every detail a type of the Lord Jesus. We look at him, in the portion before us, as a man of faith in whom the Spirit of Christ is, and we see him the spring and energy of Israel.

Joshua was by Jericho, surveying its walls rising up

to heaven and its brazen gates; and as Israel had no offensive weapons of war wherewith to throw down these defences, how should this stronghold be won? Reason might suggest a thousand difficulties; God presents us with a sight of the man of faith alone with Himself, obtaining His mind as to victory. The forces of the world are to us what the defences of Jericho were to the nomad tribes of Israel. In ourselves we are impotent before them. With divine power all things are possible.

As Joshua lifted his eyes, he saw before him a man with a drawn sword in his hand. Here was the divine revelation to him, and thither he turned his eyes, not on the defences of Jericho. In the energy of his soul, Joshua challenged the Stranger, who declared Himself to be the Captain, or Prince, of the host of Jehovah, whereon Joshua immediately fell on his face before Him, and sought His bidding.

God's resources are infinite, and He makes them known to us in Christ, according to His own glory and our need. To Moses He discovered Himself in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, for His people were in the furnace of affliction, and of Him they were not consumed; "in all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them" (Isaiah lxiii. 9); and on the holy ground of Jehovah's presence, with unshod feet, Moses received his mission of deliverance for Israel from Egypt's bondage. To Joshua, Jehovah revealed Himself in Christ, as the prince of all power, as the Captain of the host of heaven, on behalf of Israel, His army; and with unshod feet, on the holy ground of the presence of the Lord, Joshua learned the

way Jericho was to be overthrown, and gained the knowledge that Jehovah had given over to Israel, the city, its king, and all its men of war. And worshipping at the feet of the Son of Man risen from the dead, the soldier of Christ learns the end of the powers of evil and of this world.

As the supreme authority, the absolute power, of Christ our Lord engages the heart, faith increases, and we give heed to the exhortation, "Be ye strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might" (Eph. vi. 10). To the Lord Jesus Christ, as Man, all power is given in heaven and in earth (Matt. xxviii. 18). God has put all things under His feet (Eph. i. 22). He, in heaven, "is the head of all principality and power" (Col. ii. 10). True Christian conflict is for His glory and for His alone; hence so far as the Christian is truly warring for Christ, the array of Satan's powers is against him. "We wrestle not," says the Scripture, "against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places" (Eph. vi. 12). In the presence of these mighty forces, as we recognize, by faith, the Captain of the Lord's host, and as we are strong in Him and in the power of His might, so we overcome.

The drawn sword had now taken the place of the outstretched rod. The rod was the emblem of divine guidance and deliverance out of Egypt, but the sword was that of divine guidance and victory in Canaan. No longer were Israel led as a flock; they were henceforth the army sent by God to overthrow the iniquity of

Canaan. We greatly mistake Scripture if we confine our testimony to comfort and peace, for therein also are words of judgment and of woe. In the most emphatic way, at this time, out of the mouth of the Lord goes a sharp two-edged sword (Rev. i. 16); and decided and unmitigated judgment against evil is pronounced from heaven against iniquity. In the hastening day of the Kingdom, when the heavens shall be opened, the Lord, the Faithful and the True, shall smite the nations with the sharp sword which goeth out of His mouth. (Rev. xix. 15, 21.) The exceeding terribleness of God's wrath against sin, and the testimony to the judgment Christ will, by His word, execute against sinners, form part of Christian offensive warfare against this world. To render such testimony, we must have our hearts occupied with the revelation of Himself with the drawn sword, and this revelation is received at His feet. (Read Rev. i.)

The whole of the solemn passage we are considering should be read as the verses are given in the heading of this chapter. In it this parenthesis occurs: "Now Jericho did shut up and was shut up (margin) because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in." The whole passage gives us God's mind about the sword, the end of Jericho, and His way of bringing about its overthrow. The parenthesis states what was Jericho's condition, and occurring, as it does, between the statement of Joshua's worshipping on the holy ground of the Divine Presence and the revelation concerning Jericho's end, it is most suggestive. We learn God's mind in the sanctuary of His presence, and according as we are in His presence, so does He reveal His truth to us. He who became dead, lives to die no more; we

bow at the feet of the Son of Man in glory. Where Joshua fell down, and where John fell down, let us fall down and worship. At His feet are revealed the reality of His sword and the judgment of the world. The history of evil, dark and dreadful as it is, is but a brief parenthesis in the purposes of God. A rebellious life, or the life of a rebellious world that goes on its course in resolute opposition to God, is a thing of a moment, viewed in the light of eternal ages. Indeed the world's history is but the parenthesis of the creature's will, occurring in the midst of the divine purpose! How soon will all be over! Boast as the world does, or as a worldly man may do, in shutting God out, sudden destruction must come, and there will be no escape.

Observing the parenthetical verse, it is seen that the Captain of the Lord's host is Jehovah-Jesus, who gave Joshua directions as to the manner of Israel's warfare, and before a step was taken, laid out their mysterious career on the number of the days of a week. The number seven governed their proceedings; for priests, trumpets, days, and times, all were sevenfold. God has marked out His dealings with the earth into periods of sevens; from Genesis to Revelation, His ways with the earth in reference to the Kingdom are thus divided, and each week we live proclaims to every man the history of time, and in the last moments of that history our lot is cast.

The array of Israel is also suggestive. The ark that had brought them into Canaan was the centre of the armed host (ver. 9), and so is Christ the centre of the army of God's people, while before the ark went praise—the seven priests; and true it is, that in Christian

warfare, praise sevenfold is in the front. The character of the praise, too, is significant, for each priest had the trump of gladness, the cornet of jubilee (not a ram's horn), the notes of which proclaimed freedom—liberty—the acceptable year of the Lord. These joyful sounds were to fall continually upon the ears of the men of Jericho, as the armed men encircled the city.

Such was the array of Israel, day by day, until the end. Let such be ours, Christ first, praise next, then work :—a foolish spectacle to the world, it is true, but “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.” (2 Cor. x. 4.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Mode of Warfare.

JOSHUA vi. 6-21.

“Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.”—
2 PET. iii. 12.

THE action of Israel, as the army of God, begins immediately after the command is given by the Prince of the host of Jehovah. Up to this point the Book of Joshua describes God's work in bringing His people into Canaan, and giving them of its food preparatorily to their active service in war. So the establishment of the Christian in grace is of necessity antecedent to his being an effective soldier of Christ. God's work for the believer must be rested in, and His work in him must be unhindered, before the soldier of Christ is fit to fight for Him. A child of God, doubting his sonship, or engaged in spiritual struggles with himself, is not an effective soldier for Christ. He may wear the uniform, but he is unable to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and wield it in the might of the Lord, for, so long as “I” is the burden of the soul, offensive warfare is impossible. “The things that I would, I do not; and that I would not, that do

I," is the expression of inward struggling to be free, and a proof that the standing in Christian liberty, without which spiritual conflict cannot be waged, is still not enjoyed.

Again, if Christian liberty be known as a matter of faith, through grace, there must be holy living in order to maintain spiritual conflict. A right state before God is requisite, as well as faith in our being blessed in Christ. Subjection to God and obedience to the Scriptures are necessities for true Christian warfare. We must walk with God if we would war for God. Suppose the Spirit who indwells us is striving with us because ways are not pleasing to God, could we be truly contending for God at such a moment? Impossible. There may be a semblance of true conflict in such a case, but it will be but the semblance. Christian soldiership demands that there should be both faith in what God has wrought for us and a yielding to His working in us.

Both the blessing of the believer in Christ and the healthy state of the Christian's soul, as seen in the types and figures of our book, are preliminaries to the active warfare which now opens up. The passage of the Jordan showed us, in figure, the believer's entrance into the heavenly places, and Gilgal likewise figured his true place of liberty; while the partaking of the feast of the passover, of the unleavened bread, and the corn of the land, proclaimed true feeding on Christ; and upon these great realities came the vision of the drawn sword and the commands relative to the overthrow of Jericho.

It would appear that Joshua gave his orders to Israel immediately upon receiving them from the Captain of

the Lord's host. Faith is equally balanced in its energy and patience, for faith is simply carrying out the mind of God. To the priests the word of command was, "Take up the ark"; to the armed men, "Pass on and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord."

Soldiers of Christ, our Lord, in heaven! Let us stir up our souls to faith. The Lord has promised the victory as He promised it to Israel. They believed Him, "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down." Faith grasps God's strength; "all things are possible to him that believeth." Let the soldier of Christ, at his Lord's bidding, go forth to fight for Him, and let him be as assured of victory as was Israel, before whom, the ponderous walls fell down flat.

Soldiers of Christ stir up the soul to courage! Christian courage tells upon adversaries as nothing else does. Christian courage is the first-born son of Faith. Again, let us stir up our souls to hardness. Warriors do not fight upon feather beds, nor stretched at ease in arm chairs, and the Christian soldier must expect hardship. Moreover he must not entangle himself with the affairs of this life, but please Him who has called him to be a soldier. Life's duties must be honourably performed, but we are forbidden to entangle ourselves with them. There are many "indispensables," as they are called, which are really entanglements, and which a Christian, zealous for Christ, learns to discard. He cannot afford to be occupied during the few hours of active service he is called to on earth, with things which once engrossed his thoughts and time. Like the racer, he lays aside every weight. Weights and entanglements are sore

hindrances to Christian service. Anything that keeps the mind busy, to the exclusion of Christ's interests, should be suspected.

In Christian conflict, the armed men ever go on in the front, the gathering host make up the rear. God has always His front-rank men—men able to use the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ; men, too, who expose themselves to Satan's attacks.

A good soldier loves his profession, and a true Christian soldier loves Christian warfare ; it is his joy, his delight, to take pleasure in hardships and weariness. He enjoys what feather-bed Christians regard as self-inflicted penance, or as unnecessary trouble. Forward, ever forward, is his cry. It is no burden to him, but rather his happy service, to spend and to be spent for his Lord ; it is heavenly rapture to him when sinners are made captive for Christ, when Satan-bound souls are loosed, and pass from death unto life, from the power of Satan to God. Idleness and ease are a distress to the one who is fired by eternal prospects, energized by the Holy Ghost, and constrained by Christ's love. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel," is his reply to the countless efforts to damp his ardour and to quench his zeal. Eternity, eternity, he whispers to himself, when his weary body almost resents carrying out the orders of his soul. Such a spirit marks the front-rank men. May God bring Christ's soldiers to the front and especially may the young Christian, who reads this page, be fired by the prospects of eternity, and be filled with holy zeal the entire period of his short life below.

Expectation is the offspring of faith, small expectations are born of small faith ; but where God is before the

soul, expectation of blessing exists, and result follows. We do not say immediate result is always visible ; but working for God without expecting Him to bless, is like sowing seed without looking for the harvest, or firing at a fortress without hoping to hit it.

An army without faith in its leaders is sure to be discomfited. Without faith in their Lord, Christ's soldiers strike no good blows. Alas for the pointless, aimless, self-satisfied routine which goes by the name of fighting for God ! Such parade duty is not warfare. The untutored eye may consider both very much alike ; however, when men fall down wounded, and cry for mercy, we know it is not the effect of mere human energy, but the work of God the Holy Ghost.

Joshua gave orders for the day only : " Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord." So all work of faith is day by day work, step by step progress ; and this is the only true and happy way of living for God. In the happy satisfaction that they had obeyed God, Israel's first day ended ; a comfort which we trust may be ours each one daily ; and as to the rest, let the men of Jericho think as they please.

Early in the morning of the second day Joshua arose, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. A fresh fact is now presented, and one which is of practical moment. The seven priests " went on continually and blew with the trumpets." No voice was uttered by Israel, and the only sounds the army gave forth were the continual tramp of its many feet and the loud and penetrating blast of its trumpets—the grand herald notes of the Kingdom of God. We may fairly assume that such a mode

of warfare, such a continual trumpeting, was to the men of Jericho, shut up and secure within their defences, as consummate folly as is the joy of the gospel to the infidel world. A huge army, betaking itself to marching round a strong city, and ever giving out such joyful sounds, was, to the eye and ear, fanaticism. No casting up of mounds, no construction of battering rams, no scaling ladders, nothing but the trumpets of jubilee! And what their blasts meant, the men of Jericho knew no more than does the world *to-day* understand the joy of the acceptable year of the Lord, and of the coming Kingdom of Christ.

The notes of our trumpets of jubilee like those of Israel are few and simple: "Christ is coming!" "Christ is coming!" But they are joy-notes, uttered from the heart, by true souls who long for the Lord and His return. Let the world man its great walls of infidelity and superstition, let it boast in its improvements and development; Christ is coming! Let reasoners say, since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were; Christ is coming! Let scoffers cry "Fanaticism!" Be the life-answer of the Christian, to all the arguments of unbelief, these notes of love and joy, Christ is coming!

The priests—the men whose service on this earth was the worship of Jehovah—blew the trumpets. So the joyful sound comes from worshipping souls. The doctrine of Christ's coming may exist in the mind, but joy in His coming arises solely when the love of Christ is sweet in the heart. Such is true testimony. The testimony of Israel to Jericho, through the priests going on continually, was one long jubilant sound. The force which lies in true Christian courage has

already been spoken of; but true Christian joy is almost as great a witness of God's presence. Israel could not help singing their joy-song at the Red Sea. They were free, their chains were gone, and their fears were buried with their oppressors in the deep waters of their deliverance. Neither can the soul, brought into the knowledge of perfect salvation in Christ, abstain from joy—yes, exuberant joy. And a healthy thing it is for older Christians to renew their youth in singing to the Lord, Who has triumphed gloriously, in company with such as have just been brought by grace to God. As the stiffness and self-occupation of old age melt away in the presence of the simple joys of children, so do dryness and coldness in older Christians disappear in the presence of the joy God gives to the new-born babe in Christ. True, too true, Israel's song at the Red Sea died away into wilderness murmurings; but there was no dying away, no cessation of the joy-notes of the jubilee trumpets all the seven days—all the perfect period of Israel's compassing of Jericho.

This joyful sound was not merely a song of their own freedom, but the continuous witness that the powers of evil were about to be overthrown, and that God's kingdom should come. The obedience of the silent host, and the continual sound of the trumpets proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord, offer a very suggestive contemplation for Christian soldiers. Israel struck the blow that overwhelmed Jericho by blowing the trumpets.

The seventh day was marked by especial zeal and sevenfold energy. "And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner

seven times : only on that day they compassed the city seven times." We cannot doubt that this scene looks on to the end, to Israel's future, and the world-kingdom of our Lord. It takes us on to the circumstances of the Book of Revelation—to the approaching end. But in view thereof we may well stimulate our souls to renewed zeal and fresh patience. Patience is stamped upon the mode of Israel's warfare — that peculiar patience which goes on till God's time of victory arrives. "Persistency" is a word every Christian needs to have inscribed on his banner. There is a sevenfold, a perfect, trial of faith for the soldiers of Christ in the path of obedience ; and the nearer the day, the more the need of earnest toil for the Lord. The nearer the end, the more call for diligence.

The power of Satan cannot be overcome save in divinely-given strength, and, whatever the zeal and the fervour of God's saints, prayer is their constant need. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance" (Eph. vi. 18), is what God enjoins upon the soldier of Christ.

The shout of victory will soon be heard ! The Lord will give the word, and then the defences of evil will fall before Him. When men shall say "Peace and safety," then sudden destruction will come upon them. In the prospect of that day, let every man go up straight before Him ; for there is too much of following leaders, and too little of simple obedience to the Lord, among the soldiers of Jesus Christ. Men crowd on one another's steps, and the nobleness of individuality is lacking, few daring to brave the sneer of being peculiar in doing each his own duty in obedience to the word of the Lord.

CHAPTER XIX.

Lessons in Defeat.

JOSHUA vii.

“Anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”—
REV. iii. 18.

CONSIDERATIONS essentially practical to Christian warfare now open up. The conduct of Israel before Jericho teaches what the behaviour of the soldiers of Jesus Christ should be in the world; while the lessons of Ai show what Christian conflict too frequently is, in its actual workings. In the end, at Ai, as at Jericho, victory was assured through grace; and it is written for us, whatever our defeats, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” (Rom. xvi. 20.)

Before victory, amongst God’s people, there is invariably dependence on God, and prayerful following of His word; and by these means God prepares His own for beholding His glorious work. But such are our hearts that, in the very victory God gives us, we are apt to begin to trust in self and to loosen our girdles. The path to victory is usually a safer one than the vantage ground of success obtained. Never more than in a time of marked blessing is a truly watchful and

prayerful spirit needed; never more than when God gives victory do soldiers of Christ require to apply to themselves the practical truth of circumcision. Indeed, defeats often arise from absence of care in the hour of success.

Each hour of the week of warfare around Jericho had shown Israel's utter inability to conquer in their own strength, and had proved that in every sense the conquest was of God. At the very moment of victory God had given Israel warning what each soldier should shun, "lest ye make yourselves accursed." But Israel had in spirit departed from their strength. Sin in the camp occasioned defeat, and the pride of the army hindered the discovery of the sin.

In God's history of events before Ai, He lifts the veil previous to His record of a single step taken by Israel, so that the reader of His word may not fail to enter into His thoughts about the sin in the camp. His finger points out the evil hidden in the midst of Israel long before they discovered its presence (Josh. vii. 1). Had they been walking humbly, they would have sought God before the battle, and He would have indicated that evil was among them; then their humiliation would have been alone with God, and on their faces they would have received His word to clear themselves. But their pride prevented dependence on God.

No evil can be hidden in our individual hearts, or amongst a company of God's people, of which He is ignorant. No deception, no lie, is compatible with God's presence, or with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And if we do not feel the evil among us, we are lacking in communion with God. On this point, instead of ex-

cusing ourselves, we require to be firm and stern with our souls. God creates misgivings in His saints, or makes them sensible, through His Spirit dwelling in us, that something is wrong, when they are near Him in heart. In the absence of this godly state of soul, God allows the evil to develop, till, by feeding on its fruits of misery, His people at length are so humiliated that they are forced to humble themselves. Then, once more, the watchful and prayerful spirit is found, and God again allows victory to arise.

God never alters His principles of government because of His ways of grace. Israel was flushed with the pride of success; therefore He allowed them to find out, by means of their defeat, that He was angry with them, sin being in their midst. They had committed a trespass; they had "deceived a deceit;" they had "sinned," and "dissembled also." Achan, the troubler, was representative of the people; the sin of one was that of all; the corporate body was affected by the guilt of the unit. Now, as a matter of fact, Christians usually discover the presence of sin among them, which God hates, by the result of His chastening, and too seldom discern it as dear children in His presence, under the gentle eye of His love. Spiritual discernment, to which most lay claim as a matter of course, is really a fine fruit of the Spirit of God, and by no means that common hedgerow plant which many regard it to be.

Israel looked at Ai as contemptible. Its name—"a heap of ruins"—suggests that it was not like Jericho—a city mighty and fortified. Had it been a powerful place, maybe Israel would have sought God about its overthrow; but the language of the spies

(after they had gone "up and viewed the country")—"Make not all the people to labour thither, for they are few"—indicates confidence in their own strength, instead of trust in God for Ai's destruction. Truly recognizing God as our strength alone, we hang on Him as much for the small as for the great enemies. Do we not know practically how that little enemies occasion great defeats?

Alas for the pride of victory! Could Christians boast in the number of their converts if they really believed that by God the Spirit each one had been born anew? Could teachers of the word vaunt themselves in their knowledge, if realizing that they were themselves taught of God? Those who walk in pride God is able to abase; His "great Name" requires humility in man—a divine principle man is slow to learn.

On went Israel, knowing not that their sin had separated them from God. Their chosen three thousand were confident of success; but they fled before the men of Ai, "who chased them from before the gate," and smote them. Their courage, built on self-confidence, broke down completely, "wherefore the hearts of the people melted and became as water."

The self-confident despair in defeat; whilst those who draw upon divine resources strengthen themselves in God in the day of trouble. Adversity and anguish in natural things bring out real moral greatness in men; so in things spiritual the really great spirit is manifest when everything seems to be adverse. David, in his dark hour, encouraged himself in the Lord his God. Joshua, like most men, almost blamed God for the overthrow. The effect, not the cause, seems to have

filled his soul; the defeat, not the reason of it. "Alas," he cried in his bitterness—"Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us?"

A man really praying to God speaks out the truth of what is in his heart. This lamentation proved how far from the spirit of self-judgment Israel was; for to their leader it seemed that the seeds of sorrow were sown not in the camp, but in the heavens of God. Yet this need occasion no surprise, as usually the last place we are wont to search for the cause of our defeat is the state of our own souls. We may, perhaps, say we needed this sorrow, but seldom do we recognize why we needed it.

Let us now turn and engage ourselves with the more healthy spectacle of the nation, representatively through its elders, lying low before the Lord. The praying attitude of these leaders is most hopeful. Their defeat had sent them to God. Would God such an attitude, spiritually speaking, might in this proud day, be that of those who suffer defeats before "a heap of ruins," as the world may be termed when we recognize what it really is in God's sight. God revealed the secret of the discomfiture to the elders of Israel, when they were prostrate in His presence before the ark, and He did this, despite the lack of absolute self-judgment, which seemed to mark Joshua's lamentation. No doubt in the want of this rare quality lay the cause of the secret of the defeat not being discovered earlier; for from morn till even the nation of Israel knew not the cause. Pride stands in the way of true discernment;

defeat may send us to God; yet, notwithstanding this, unless we rightly judge ourselves, our hearts remain in the dark as to the cause which hinders God from prospering us.

When Joshua had reached the very depth of his lamentation, and had reckoned all Israel as clean cut off, he touched the Name of Jehovah, saying, "What wilt Thou do unto Thy great Name?" This question, asked at the end of the day, called forth the answer of Jehovah as to the cause of Israel's trouble. God was acting amongst them for the glory of His great Name. Because of His great Name were their defeat and slaughter. What a heart-searching discovery! To all appearances the defeat of God's people denied the greatness of the Name of their God, but God sets His glory above appearances, His Name is greater than His people's successes; His character is bound up in His Name; His army, His Israel, had sinned. To the natural eye, the sight of men stricken by the hand of their God, might indeed awaken the question, "Is God among them?" To the spiritual understanding the truth is evident, that the honour of the great Name of the Lord demands in His people purity and humility, cost what it may.

Jehovah's answer to His servant, "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?" is again a lesson. How had Joshua been lying upon his face? "Thus"—despairing and practically casting the cause of Israel's defeat upon God. To lie upon the face before God is the only true attitude a believer can take, in a season of shame and dishonour; to affect any other is but to add the sin of pride to that which causes the

defeat. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up." (James iv. 10.) True humiliation before God is our only "door of hope" (Hosea ii. 15) for blessing in a day of distress; but to lie "thus"—not judging ourselves, but blaming God, is not humility.

The spirit which chafes under defeat will not recognize the cause of defeat. True humility is rarer than diamonds. The question in the camp was of Israel's sin, their unconfessed and, therefore, unforgiven sin. God required this question first to be settled. That accomplished, He would use His people for His glory. Arise, for how could prayer that confessed not sin be availing? Sin had to be cast out. Action to this end was required by God.

"Israel had sinned." The army of the holy One, sent to destroy the wickedness in Canaan, had opened its bosom to the very iniquities it was sent to sweep away. The holy God had allowed for the greatness of His Name that the sword of the Amorite should be His rod of chastisement upon His people. Thus does God allow Satan to sift His saints. He allows the "Amorite," against whom we contend, to smite us when we trifle with sin. If evil be allowed in the camp and pride in the heart, let none be surprised, that when striving with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places, Satan, the rebel, becomes God's sword against His own people.

The cause of Israel's defeat was given by Jehovah: "Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant, which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and

dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed." Terribly solemn words!—Israel "accursed," God's own people under His ban. Such is the effect of sin; such its inevitable consequences. Terrible is the sinfulness of sin before our holy God, Who is a consuming fire.

The corporate responsibility of the nation is here shown unmistakably. That great principle lies written upon the earliest dealings of God with Israel, and God changes not. Christian corporate responsibility cannot be ignored, unless God Himself be defied. Christians cannot regard themselves as isolated units in the army of God. The acts of one affect others. "One sinner destroyeth much good." (Eccles. ix. 18.) The sin of one works harm in a multitude, and because of the evil of one, all are defeated, and become as weak as water.

The promise of prosperity in the wars in Canaan was contingent upon Israel's obedience. Now in Achan they had not only sinned; they had transgressed a plain command. The accursed, or devoted, thing had been taken in contravention of the command of God, laid upon Israel before the destruction of Jericho—"The city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord: . . . and ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord." (Josh. vi. 17-19.) Not a shred

nor a shekel from Jericho did God allow Israel for their personal glory or wealth. Nothing was to be appropriated by those who were called to execute the ban of God on the Canaanite. Now Achan had laid hands both upon the garment and the gold, both on that which was accursed to the fire, and that which was devoted to Jehovah's treasury. Achan was a prince in Israel, and it is often through the leaders, and not through the rank and file of God's army, that sin and sorrow are introduced. Achan coveted the garment of Shinar, the silver, and the wedge of gold, and he hid them in his tent; and thus were found in the midst of Israel the very things God commanded not to be touched.

The embroidered garment was desired for self-glorification, the silver and gold for self-advancement; all were surreptitiously introduced into the camp, coveting, taking, dissembling, being mingled in the sin.

The garment was of Shinar. The place Babylon occupies in the ways of men towards God, and in the great judgments of God on men, must not be overlooked. Babel was the first organized attempt to establish a name for man, and a centre of human union, in opposition to divine authority. Babel, in the plains of Shinar, was the resolute apostacy of man from God. There God came down, scattered the race of man, and turned their tower of greatness into Confusion. And this will He do in the latter day, when spiritual Babylon once more rises into power!

The plain of Shinar had its manufactories when God destroyed Jericho, and Satan did wisely in bringing, through Achan's covetousness, the cloak of Babylon

into the camp at Gilgal. At the very moment Israel was being used as God's executive to destroy the stronghold which was the key to Canaan, then the accursed thing, the princely robe in its attractive form, was being secreted in their midst! Just at the hour of the baring of Jehovah's mighty arm, and when His treasury should have been honoured, He was being robbed by His own people. Thus the camp of Gilgal, Israel's place of separation to Him, was leavened with the accursed thing, and Israel was made thereby a curse.

The exceeding solemnity of divine holiness commands us in this scene, and we can but enquire, What in our day answers to the accursed thing which caused the camp of Israel to be a curse? The garment was obviously for purposes of self-glorification. Being a robe from Shinar, it was characteristically an emblem of that early apostacy in which man exalted himself in opposition to God. Israel, in Canaan and circumcised, were separated to Jehovah, their strength. Our circumcision, the putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, and our separation to God, are in Christ risen from the dead. Now when a believer, warring for his risen Lord, seeks his own glorification, even by reason of the Lord's using him, he is really exalting himself. He covets to adorn himself in the very things of the flesh upon which he knows God has passed the sentence of fire, and thus in measure he is in spirit like Achan. And, if he would use the silver and the gold belonging to the Lord's treasury for his own advantage, he is again like Achan, and will pierce himself through with many sorrows. Our sins must sooner or later find us out.

Longings after the goodly Babylonish garment, after self-glorification, and thereby robbing God of His glory, are common enough, alas! Too many soldiers of the Lord in heaven have this buried in their tents. How exalted I am! is the secret name of this robe. In the tent, in the inner life, in the home circle, the truth of our desires comes out. And God sees us as we really are. Achan certainly never wore the garment for all Israel to admire. Whether his own personal friends extolled its glory, or whether he never so much as flung it over his shoulders, was of no difference before God, to whose eye the sin was manifest.

The greater the profession of holiness and separation to God a Christian makes, the more urgent upon him is God's demand for practical resemblance to Jesus our Lord. If we recognize our blessings in the heavenly places in Christ being over the Jordan of death and judgment, and if we assert that we are dead with Christ to the world, and risen with Him and alive to God, all the more terrible will be our reaping day, should we do the very things our doctrines deny: such behaviour is in absolute contradiction to the Christian profession, and such as practise it are like Achan.

It is remarkable how allied in spirit are the two great marks of God's displeasure with His Jewish and Christian people, at the commencement of their respective careers on earth. In the early days of Israel's history in Canaan, as in the early days of Christianity, we find God swiftly judging evil amongst His people, and bringing out into the light the secret sins of those who were seemingly for Him on the earth. Ananias and

Sapphira, as Achan, "dissembled." But God is not deceived. It is for us to open our eyes upon our own actions, and to seek to see ourselves as God sees us. God's moral laws can never be tampered with by His people with impunity. Our secret sins are all bare in the light of His countenance; "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Dissembling also will sooner or later be published from the housetops. Let servants and soldiers of Christ study their own secret objects, lest by self-seeking they, in the end, trouble not only their own souls, but defile and trouble the camp.

In the solemn lessons to be gathered from this scene, let not these words of the Lord to defeated Israel, "Sanctify yourselves," be neglected. His word was not, Look to your arms, but, Look to the state of your hearts. Holiness is the requisite for victory. "There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you." Their hands were to cast out the sin from their midst; they themselves were to put it out from among themselves ere they could again wield the sword. All Canaan, and its contending hosts, might know, it mattered not, how the army of God lay under the ban, and could never triumph more till the glory of Jehovah's great Name was re-established in the camp; and the casting out of the evil from their midst was the only way whereby God would again be among them. Most Christians, who have lived to middle life, have lived sufficiently long to see men once valiant for God and used by Him,

lying, under His stern hand of government, withered and practically worthless, as servants unused and disowned, because they have not heeded His word. "Sanctify yourselves."

In his energy, "Joshua rose up early in the morning," and brought Israel by their tribes before the Lord. Sifting from tribe to family, from family to man, the transgressor was in due course manifested. Where men are honest in their desire to clear themselves from iniquity, God will enable them to sift out till the seeds of the sin are discovered, and when He begins He will make an end. And more, the force of God's presence draws out from man the confession of sin. If the root of bitterness be not discovered, the reason is, God is staying His hand because of the carnal state of His people. Wherever sin lies unconfessed, God is afar off in our thoughts. It is utterly impossible to be before God, and not to be absolutely truthful, down into the deepest depths of the soul.

At the seat of judgment, God will bring every secret thing into the light; everything now covered will be revealed; and at this hour, those hidden evils amongst God's people, which bar the manifestations of His presence, would be exposed, confessed, and cast out, were His saints truly before His face.

Achan confessed his sin, pronounced publicly what had been in his breast. The messengers ran, dug up the accursed thing, and laid it out in the broad daylight before Jehovah. None of the shame of the sin was hidden, no hushing up of iniquity for the sake of peace dreamed of; the truth, not policy, prevailed; for the

question on that solemn day of heart-searching was, Jehovah or man?

As all Israel were involved in the dishonour done to Jehovah by their prince, so all Israel joined hands in clearing their camp. "All Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire." And more, Israel was at that hour in no mood to smooth the memory of their sorrow. "They raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, the Valley of Achor [*i.e.*, trouble], unto this day."

The valley of Achor is the door of hope for God's people still. Through that valley, where stands the witness of iniquity cast out, and the memory of our shame, remains to this day the pathway to blessing. Weeping over our pride, and putting away from us our sins, ever lead to renewed victories. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.)

CHAPTER XX.

Lessons in Victory.

JOSHUA viii. 1-28.

"The Lord your God will deliver it into your hand."—JOSH. viii. 7.

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."—EPH. vi. 18.

So long as Israel's sin remained unconfessed, it remained unforgiven, and consequently they had no strength to war for Jehovah. He was not with them, for the sin in their camp had separated between them and their God (Isa. lix. 2); but having now confessed and forsaken their sin, God had put it away. Some of God's people spend months—nay, years—of their lifetime in a condition of spiritual inaction, their hearts like water, and themselves afar from the knowledge of God's mind! Let there be but the breadth of a hair severing the telegraphic line of communication between this country and America, and we cannot hold intercourse with our friends across the ocean. Thus does sin separate between God and His people. Not indeed that God foregoes His grace towards His own, or fails to bring them safely home; but here on earth, during this lifetime, uncon-

fessed sin breaks into the communication of God's mind to us, and to it is due the absence of divine power in us, and hence ineffective soldiership.

So long as communion with God is broken, courage for Him is lacking. Spiritual courage is the consequence of faith in God, and active faith follows communion with Him. Abraham walked with God, and God said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" Upon the mind of God being communicated to the servant, the servant acts in faith, and gains the victory. Unfaithful hearts, proud self-reliant spirits, occasion defeat in the Lord's work. Jehovah's word, "I will not be with you any more," is a solemn sentence for the Christian soldier, and until the evil God exposes be cast out from the midst of His people, defeat follows their steps. The really effective soldier of Christ is not only a constant and energetic worker for God, he is also a truly humble and dependent man walking with God. Unless the Christian be in a right state before God, the Spirit is grieved, and His fire in the soul is quenched. True power in the believer is not his own might, but God's strength in him; he is but a vessel filled by the Lord. As Jehovah was not with Israel, and as He withdrew from Samson, so does He now leave His people when their ways are evil in His sight. He never leaves nor forsakes in the sense of casting off for ever; but in His governmental dealings He does leave unfaithful servants, even as the fondest parent turns his face from his child until the child forsakes his evil way.

Men once used for God are at times set aside by God; they go on as of old in their work, but win no victories; they essay, like Samson, to shake themselves, but the

Philistines obtain the mastery. The story of Ai unveils the cause—hidden evil is in the camp. Again these self-same servants arise, and, after a period of defeat, become once more vessels of power with God and with men. The story of Ai again lets us into the secret: they have been before God, and have humbled themselves. As He has discovered to them the cause of their failure, so they have judged themselves in His sight, casting out the evil thing from amongst them, and once more God gives them courage to go forward, granting victory to their efforts.

Having turned from the fierceness of His anger against His people Israel, the Lord encouraged Joshua to go forward, saying, "Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai." Reassuring indeed were God's words, recalling His first gracious exhortation and encouragement, victory was ensured. But how differently was the battle to be fought from the way in which Israel had at first proposed to overthrow the "heap of ruins," Ai! They had said, "Make not all the people to labour thither"; the Lord said, "Take all the people of war," and as the thousands of Israel arose to battle, each soldier had to remember that small foes cannot be made light of, for of Jehovah alone was Israel's strength and courage.

"Labour thither" all Israel did—some to the ambush, others to the front—for when we lightly make errors, and sin wilfully in our service, God enforces upon us by toil and labour those lessons we neglected, even though He has shown us our errors and pardoned our ways. And not only did Israel labour up to Ai, but God

made them victorious through humiliation ; by apparent defeat, by fleeing before their foes, they won their success. Falls and failures teach the believer to walk with diffidence. He who is not of a chastened spirit after a fall or a failure has not thoroughly repented of the iniquity of his sin, neither is God truly with the man who is not of a chastened spirit, "for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. xii. 29.)

Hidden work, that which goes on in the heart with God, the world sees not. God's ways with His people baffle all human calculations. The foe reckons merely on human might; of the secret things which render God's hand against His saints in their path of service and warfare, the world concerns itself not. We see this principle in the way the king of Ai came out against Israel. He saw no change in them. To his eye, they were the selfsame people who had fled before him a day or two previously ; therefore he imagined they would fall into his hands as easily as before. He wist not that the Lord was among them. On he came, but only to meet his doom and to complete the destruction of his city. Joshua's outstretched javelin was the signal to Israel, and the sign of a war which cannot cease till every foe is cast down and destroyed.

Little did the heathen king dream what was the result of God's secret work in the camp, accomplished through His dealings with them in government and in rebuke. Israel was a different people from what they had been a few days previously ; their hands were clean and their hearts were strong. What the spirit of pride designates as the folly of fasting and prayer, had been favourable in the eye of the Holy One, though to human gaze it

had been but degradation of self. Spiritual movements are incomprehensible to the world—all that it recognizes is the result of the movement. May God's hidden work in the hearts of His people deepen and increase; may His soldiers be alone with Him in the camp, and, judging themselves and purifying themselves from iniquity, find God among them, and at His bidding come forth to victory, their eyes upon the outstretched spear of their Leader.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Word of Jehovah Established in Canaan.

JOSHUA viii. 30-35.

“Whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.”—1 JOHN ii. 5.

JERICHO and Ai each represent the world—their conquest by Joshua, Christ’s victory and kingdom—and the overthrow of their kings, the final overthrow of the power of Satan. Our Joshua’s victory is complete, and soon the time shall come when the “sun” of this day of rebellion against the Lord shall go “down,” and the end of the god of this world shall come. Then the risen, but once crucified, Jesus shall cast down the ruler of the darkness of this world from his seat, subject all foes, and bring all under His reign of righteousness. On this being accomplished, the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters the sea, and His word shall be established where it was despised.

After the record of the end of the king of Ai, the grand event of the land being placed under the law of the Lord is brought forward. “Then Joshua built an altar

unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings. And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel" (chap. viii. 30-32). The significance of this action, as a sequence to the overthrow of Jericho, Ai, and their kings, is very marked. The judgment and the overthrow of the heathen powers, introduced God's worship and His rule.

All Israel—armed men, women, and children—gathered together, and publicly recognized Jehovah as the Lord God of Israel, exalted His laws, and sanctified His Name in the midst of the hostile country. The hand of the Lord was with them, even as it had been on leaving Egypt, when not so much as a dog moved his tongue against them; and as it had been in Gilgal on their circumcision, when the terror of God was upon their foes. They now built the altar, and inscribed the law upon the stones in obedience to the Lord, who had said—"On the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister: and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law . . . And there shalt thou build an altar unto the Lord thy God, in Mount Ebal. And thou shalt offer burnt offerings . . . and peace offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the Lord thy God." (See Deut. xxvii. 2-7.)

This immense gathering together of the nation of Israel is a most impressive event in their history. The whole of the people, brought into God's holy habitation, with one voice, calmly and solemnly gave their Amens to His commandments.

The steep mountain sides of Ebal and Gerizim were held by the twelve tribes, six on each mount, and the narrow plain between was, we should suppose, occupied by the Levites, who spoke and said with a loud voice unto all the people both the curses and the blessings of God. (Deut. xxvii. 11-14.) Infants as well as warriors were present, "the stranger, as he that was born among them;" none were left out. And in the clear atmosphere of Canaan the words of the law would be easily heard, rising from the valley up the slopes of the mountains.

So "all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges," stood around the ark of God, and placed themselves under the commandments of the Lord, while Joshua read "all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law." They hallowed His Name, in the land where the enemy and the idols still were. As a nation they avowed by their Amens to the commandments of God and His law—by their "So be it!" to its curses and its blessings—that their prosperity, or discomfiture, in the promised land, depended upon their obedience or disobedience to God. It may be truthfully said, Israel's history, including their present condition, is but a comment upon their Amens uttered at Ebal.

The Christian is not under a covenant of law, he does not stand in his blessings save in Christ; but it is not

to be forgotten that the very portions of the Word which unfold the deepest grace are filled with exhortations as to his walk and ways.

A child is under even greater responsibility to obey than is a servant, and the Lord, by whom we stand, says to us, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." Love calls for obedience on its own condition—love! while Law calls for obedience on the condition of reward; but the voice of Love is more powerful than that of Law. Further, the Christian's successful career on earth is dependent on his obedience to the Word of his God, and though it cannot be said we resemble Israel as to the covenant under which they stood in Canaan, it is but the truth that the spiritual history of each Christian is but a comment on his obedience or disobedience to God's word. The springs of our prosperity or discomfiture lie in adherence to, or in disregard of, our God's "It is written."

The emphatic *alls* connected with the Scriptures, and recorded by the Holy Spirit in the scene now before us, should be observed. *All* Israel heard "read *all* the words of the law, according to *all* that is written." There was not a word of *all* that Moses commanded that Joshua read not before *all* the congregation of Israel. May every heart be stirred up to follow "*all*" the truth of the Scriptures.

"It is written" was emblazoned upon the standard of victory raised by Israel in the centre of the land of Canaan. The words of the Lord were plainly inscribed upon the stones for all eyes to behold, and the written word was loudly read for all ears to hear, and it was assented to by the nation.

Upon Ebal the altar was reared. It was erected to Jehovah, the Lord God of Israel. He was recognized as the Lord God of the nation, and Israel owned thereby their relationship with Him. Around this altar the entire nation assembled; and Christ is the altar and the centre of the circle of God's people, around Whom the saints gather. "An altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron," was set up, that that sacred altar might not have upon it the touch of man's tool, for to shape its stones with human hand was to "pollute" it; for Christ is the altar, and He is perfect, and the working of man's hands, man's thoughts respecting Him, do but produce infidelity and dishonour to His Name.

The offering upon the altar was first that of sweet savour. "They offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord." Now, our first thoughts of the sacrifice of Jesus are such as pertain to the sense of our need of Him; but God's first thoughts relate to the perfection of the Lord's work, and to what He is to God and the Father, and this is wholly a sweet savour unto Him. Israel had come into Jehovah's presence to worship Him, and the first voice, as it were, that arose in Canaan from the altar of the Lord God of Israel, spoke of the sweetness of the sacrifice, all of which was burned upon the altar, and the savour arose to heaven.

Next, they "sacrificed peace offerings." The burnt offerings were wholly consumed, an atonement they were for man; but they were wholly burnt unto God—"the priest shall burn all on the altar." But the peace offerings were eaten in part by the offerer, for in them the offerer had communion with God; in them man had

his portion to feed upon, he ate of the victim which had been sacrificed. And according to what the soul really feeds upon of Christ by the Spirit, there is communion with God. Then do God's people "rejoice before the Lord our God." Delight in Christ on the part of the saints is the next great fact presented by this great gathering together of Israel, and by their offerings.

"The stones" were erected "in Mount Ebal" by the commandment of Moses, and were inscribed "very plainly" (Deut. xxvii. 4-8) with the words of the law. Ebal being the mount whereon the six tribes were stationed who gave the Amens to the curses attached to disobedience of God's word, "the stones" were placed upon the basis of the mountain of man's "So be it" to the loss of his favours should he disobey God's laws! The words of the law, thus written, would remain visible to all eyes for a long period of time, and probably did so remain, longer than Israel abode in obedience.

Joshua declared all the words of Jehovah their God to the people; not the blessings only, as we at times select our favourite portions, but all the words of the Lord. Their whole prosperity in Canaan hung upon their adherence to these words; the one condition, on which the enjoyment of the land of promise, with its milk and honey, should continue to be theirs, was obedience. (Deut. xxvii. 3.) This never should be forgotten, for what we sow, we reap.

The curses were read with a loud voice by the Levites, and, as each curse for disobedience sounded in Israel's ears, the hundreds of thousands, assembled upon Mount Ebal, responded with unanimous Amens. Twelve times said they "Amen" to the twelve-times-uttered curses,

and the twelfth—"Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them"—included every possible neglect or failure of which they could be capable. Blessings also were read (Josh. viii. 33, 34); but concerning the Amens, sounding from Mount Gerizim, Scripture is silent. It records not one responsive "So be it" to blessings earned by the obedience of fallen man. (Deut. xxvii.) Man may justly assent to all "the judgments" (Ex. xxiv. 3) of God's law, but they who remain under the law must remain under its curse. (Gal. iii. 10.)

Christians are not under a covenant whereby blessings are theirs according to their obedience, for we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places IN Christ, and these blessings are ours, not according to our behaviour, but according as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has chosen us IN Him. Unbounded grace secures us our privileges, and unbounded grace has placed us IN Christ, IN Whom our privileges are secured. If we build our altar of worship, it is because "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." (Gal. iii. 13, 14.) Ours are blessings all of grace, not of works. "We are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." (Rom. vii. 6.)

The foothold of the Christian presents a striking contrast to that of Israel in this scene. Christ has, by His death, made His people free, for they have died to

the law in Him, and His cross has severed them from the law's power and dominion, for it addresses not its demands to men who are dead—"My brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." (Rom. vii. 4.) Can we doubt that the altar was erected on Ebal, the mount wherefrom the Amens to the curses proceeded, to teach that Christ has redeemed us by His sacrifice from the curse of the law?

The covenant inscribed upon the plaster-covered stones, St. Paul said, eighteen hundred years ago, "decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Heb. viii. 13); but the covenant of grace is changeless and eternal. "If that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." (Heb. viii. 7.) That of grace is perfect before God, for the Lord Jesus is the mediator thereof. His own precious blood has confirmed it, and our blessings are not entrusted to our own custody, for they are in the safe and eternal keeping of God our Father Himself. They are not written on stones, to remind us that our Amen follows the divine and faithful Yea, but are written in the Scriptures, which teach us that all are both yea and amen for us in Christ.

Yet, while our spiritual privileges are indeed, through infinite grace, secured for ever to us in Christ, in Whom we are, let us never make light of responsibility. The greater our blessing, the greater our responsibility; the injunctions under grace are incomparably more urgent for holiness than are the commands of the law. And the call to follow the Lord from Himself in Heaven is a more separating one from the world than was that which thundered forth from Sinai. We may read over

and over again Moses's words to Israel, and take their spirit to ourselves, even while rejoicing that we stand not upon such terms as did Israel. And are there not witnesses around us, who proclaim the bitterness of departing from the living God? Are not many of God's people at this day in captivity? May it not be said of such, "Thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest"? and in their captivity have they not "a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind" (Deut. xxviii. 65)? Are there not many in a like state to Israel when the Philistines and the Midianites got the mastery over them, so that they scarce dared show their faces, and reaped and threshed their very food with trembling?

God is not mocked. While all things are ours in Christ we retain the enjoyment of them upon our obedience to His word: "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love." (John xv. 10.)

CHAPTER XXII.

Alliance with Enemies.

JOSHUA ix.

“What communion hath light with darkness?”—2 Cor. vi. 14.

A GREAT combination of the people of Canaan followed upon the overthrow of Jericho and Ai, and the establishment of the law of Jehovah in the centre of the land. The nations, whether of hills, valleys, or the seaboard, gathered themselves together with one accord, or “one mouth,” to fight against Joshua and Israel. They recognized the necessity of sinking all differences, and of uniting together to gain their great end—the overthrow of Jehovah’s army.

Amongst these combined peoples were the Hivites, whose cities—Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim—were four. The heads of these cities took counsel together, and, while others of their nation sought the sword, they resorted to stratagem in order to gain their end—“they did work wilily.”

The open hostility of the enemy is ever more easy to meet than his devices. When the powers of the world array themselves against a few poor saints of God, the latter have to conquer or to die. The early

Christians stood up before the great and the mighty of their day, and, out of weakness, gained victories, the blessings of which we Christians reap to this hour. Again, at the time of the Reformation, the few frail men, who at the first would obey God rather than man, discomfited kings, emperors, and popes. God was for them, and in His might and by His might the victory was won. To their faith and courage Protestants owe their present freedom.

But when the Enemy comes guised as an angel of light, speaks smooth and flattering words, and, as in our day, argues religiously, let Christians beware. Satan has gained more successes by sowing his tares while men sleep, than by all his strength arrayed to crush God's people. When he fails to crush, he tries to corrupt: such are his devices.

The echoing *Amens* of Israel to the commandments of the Lord, and to His word bidding them abstain from all union with their enemies, had hardly died away, when the ambassadors from Gibeon presented themselves in the camp at Gilgal. These ambassadors had a fair appearance to the elders of Israel. They bore outwardly upon them the signs of having come from far, and their credentials looked antique. Persons who apparently come from a distance, have often a captivating power with God's people, and obtain a hearing which, were they better known, would be denied them. The strange fascination that pertains to apparent antiquity for antiquity's sake is patent to all. Things regarded as "old," things that are worn out, "rent and bound up," command the veneration or superstition of the mind, too frequently without the enquiry "Are these

things true?" Now-a-days numbers of Christians are content to ask of religious curiosities, "Are they old?" If at ease about their age, they are satisfied. It does not occur to many to ask "Are they genuine in the light of God's word?" nor even to enquire, what the venerable things were when new! Old and mouldy things were new and fresh once, and had the enquiry been raised in the camp of Israel as to the origin of the old things of these ambassadors, and as to what hands had woven the garments, and as to what country in which the grapes and corn had been grown, the issue would have been very different from what it was.

Let the saints beware of "dry and mouldy" bread, for stale fare is not of God's providing for His children. Rent wine-skins, with the wine run out, are like teaching and preaching which retain but the remembrance of the glad past, joy in the Holy Ghost being gone. Patched-up garments do but indicate that they have served their day, and should be discarded. God's messengers have feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and the longest journey never wears them out. "By their fruits ye shall know them," is the Master's word concerning false teachers and guides. Alas for the infatuation for the "dry and mouldy" traditions of days long since passed, and for the blindness of men to the common device of the Enemy leading them to set aside the living word of God for tradition!

The "old sacks, old wine bottles, old shoes, and old garments" of these "ambassadors" commanded the respect of Israel's princes, and their "dry" bread gave to their mission a solemn sanction. The elders of Israel took of their victuals, used their own eyes, and sought

not wisdom from God. These Hivites had deceit and lying for their weapons of warfare, and with them they gained the victory.

The oldest truths of God are ever new to the soul, for they come direct from God. When ambassadors present themselves to us, as did the Hivites to Israel, we may safely assume that their wine was grown in the enemy's land, for God's ambassadors carry with them the living energy and unction of His Holy Spirit.

Satan has little new to offer man, but he is wily in the extreme, and masterful in his way of dressing up his ambassadors, and colouring their credentials. Where he cannot ruin God's people by open war, he will squeeze himself in amongst them and corrupt the soldiers of Christ. In our own day and in our own land he is terribly successful with his wiles, and ever succeed he will where men, instead of asking counsel of the Lord, or humbly following His word, betake themselves to the wisdom of their own hearts.

To Gilgal—Israel's camp, the very spot where God had said of Israel that He had rolled off the reproach of Egypt from them, and where they had been nationally separated to Himself, and whence they had issued to war against the powers of the land of promise—to Gilgal, in their daring deception, the Hivites came! And Satan, this day, comes as an angel of light on to the very holiest ground that Christians occupy, and by flattery and deception succeeds in effecting an alliance with them in the camp itself. He corrupts the most sacred truths by introducing error into them, and spoils heavenly realities by the leaven of evil doctrine. The place Israel occupied gave them no power—a lesson for Christians!

Forms of orthodoxy are of no avail to keep out the Enemy. No creed, no principles, will keep out the Hivites; our only resource is, that to which, alas, we so slowly resort, "the mouth of the Lord." True, Christians have no Urim and Thummim as had Israel, but they have the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.

"Ambassador" signifies "a hinge," and most truly these men were the hinge to the door to let into Israel's camp the heathen they had entered Canaan to destroy. "Peradventure ye dwell among us, and how shall we make a league with you?" said Joshua to these ambassadors. "We are thy servants," they softly replied. "Who are ye, and from whence come ye?" Joshua further enquired. Then they talked of old times, and spoke of work and warfare in years gone by; they were eloquent upon Jehovah's wonders in Egypt forty years previously, and of victories a long distance from their homes on the other side of Jordan, and so disarmed him of suspicion. But not a syllable had these men to say of the work of God at their very doors at Jericho and Ai; this they kept at a careful distance: not a sentence had they to utter of Ebal and its assent to the word of Jehovah; this they excluded.

Satan's ambassadors object to discuss God's victories of to-day, His work of this hour, the things of all others, in which, if His people be walking in the Spirit, they will be most deeply interested. The facts of God's work in bygone days have become, in our own times, history, of which the world is willing to speak; but the effects of God's truth in our own days, its present victories, its demands for present obedience—such home-truths are not to be mentioned. Anyone may speak of

victories over pagan Rome, or papal Rome, of centuries ago; but the victories of the gospel in the world of this day and hour, and the Word's authority over the children of God at the present moment, must not be mentioned—as Jericho, Ai, and Ebal were carefully ignored by the Hivites.

Satan has consummate art in mingling lies with truth, and these Hivites were skilful men. They had heard the fame of Jehovah, and of the mighty kings Sihon and Og, slain by Israel, this was true; but their credentials, their mouldy bread, their rent and empty wine skins, and their old garments, each and all were lies.

Flattery overcomes more saints than does the sword. Where fierce opposition prevails over its tens, unctuous words overcome the thousands. The princes of Israel accepted the testimony of the victuals, used their own wisdom and discernment, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord; and so the Hivites gained the day.

Perhaps because the ambassadors presented themselves to the princes, they gained their way the easier. Many a man of position in the things of God, many "a prince in Israel," falls through flattery. Flattering words blind the soul to the reality of things. The very position he occupies is solely the gift of God, but if he use the authority entrusted to him as if his own wisdom were his power, he is liable to fall through not asking counsel at the mouth of the Lord. The truly dependent spirit is often more rare in the "prince" than in the rank and file of God's army. Achan, a prince, brought the accursed thing into the camp, and these princes made the alliance with the heathen, and brought Israel into association with their enemies. And the error of

the princes of Israel is placed before us in a marked way by the Holy Ghost in the book before us.

"To the law and to the testimony" must ever be the Christian's test of the qualifications of the ambassadors from a far country. He must ask counsel at the mouth of the Lord, gain the true wisdom from God's word by the Spirit, and obey the Scriptures.

The truth came out at last. What appeared to come from a distance was a next-door neighbour. At the end of three days the error was discovered. The princes had committed the people to the alliance, they had opened the way into Israel's bosom for the idolaters, and their oath had to be respected. No wonder "all the congregation murmured against the princes"; but God would not allow the evident lies of the Gibeonites to be an excuse for the evil that the princes had imposed upon the congregation through the exercise of their own wisdom, and through neglecting to humble themselves to ask counsel at the mouth of the Lord. Princes lead in the congregation of God's people, and He allows the evil of their self-sufficiency to continue, and root it out they cannot—what is sown must be reaped.

Now, when the leaders in the church of God, by their pride and self-sufficiency, allow alliances with God's enemies, be it of principles or of persons, the consequences must be borne by the church. Never will the church of God be seen again in its fidelity to Christ and in separation from the world, as it was at the first. In a limited way, the same truth applies to revivals among Christians, who in spirit in different ages have resorted to Gilgal, the camp, and have thence issued to victory.

To the camp sooner or later Satan's ambassadors come, and there by the leaders they are received, and the tradition of men is accepted where the truth of God should alone prevail, with the result of weakness and eventual corruption.

In God's sovereign mercy to these Hivites the Christian can rejoice. But the Christian cannot rejoice in their victory through deceit and lying, nor in the defeat of the princes through their own self-sufficiency. Poor heathen they were, and for their lives they wrought, and though their lives were spared, cursed were they, and under the ban, all their days. They were devoted to be slaves to the sanctuary, as the silver and gold at Jericho had been devoted in an absolute manner to Jehovah.

The princes of Israel of the present day, who effect alliances with enemies, and bring into the congregation things of the world, the flesh, and the devil, will never find God in His sovereignty, making these evil things to serve in His sanctuary. On the contrary, the end of such alliances will be, that the Hivites will get the Israelites into the slaves' place. In other words such ways will end, where the energy of the book of Joshua ends, and where the book of Judges begins—in Bochim, Weeping.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Might of the Lord.

JOSHUA X.

“Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations.”—REV. xix. 15.

WE now approach the great and decisive battle, which brings in the succession of victories, and the subjugation of the land, with the account of which the first part of the Book of Joshua closes.

The combination of the kings and nations against Israel, with which the ninth chapter opens, was successful where wiles were adopted, but was utterly broken where open war was the means employed. Finding that Gibeon had made terms with Israel, Adoni-zedec, the king of Jerusalem, summoned the king of Hebron and the adjoining kings to go up with him against that city, which at once called Joshua to its aid.

The king of Jerusalem, Adoni-zedec (the Lord of Righteousness), bore a similar title to his predecessor, Melchizedek (King of Righteousness), when Jerusalem (peaceful possession, or possession of peace) was called Salem (Peace). How the king of Righteousness, and

king of Peace (Hebrews vii. and Genesis xiv.) waited on God's servant, Abraham, with the bread and the wine, we know. In those days the living God was honoured in Salem, and through all ages Melchizedek shines brightly as a type of Christ, the Priest and King. Hebron also, one of the earliest seats of civilization in Palestine, had its old associations in connection with the patriarchs. But now to Hebron comes the first call to fight against Israel. In the time, therefore, of the combination of the kings, the fear of the Most High had been shaken off by the nations of Canaan. The sun and the moon, Baal and Ashtaroath (Judges ii. 13), were worshipped, their iniquity was full, their harvest had passed, their summer ended, and the wrath of God was about to fall upon them.

No foes are so bitter in their hatred of God as those who once recognized His Name. When Christianity was at first spread abroad, the Jews were its most determined opposers. The very truths they held, they turned as weapons against the gospel of the Son of God. They wrested the words of Moses and the prophets, and warred against God. The system of papal Rome's opposition to the truths of the Scriptures is greater than was that of pagan Rome; and in the coming day modern infidelity, developed into apostate Christendom, will prove itself the fiercest foe the word of God has ever had. In that approaching apostacy, "Lords of righteousness," bearing the good old titles and memories of faith in God long lost, ruling over their "possessions of peace," will be the moving powers of the opposition in Christendom to the Christ of God.

When the awful word of Jehovah demanding Israel

to destroy the nations of Canaan is considered, the iniquity of the Amorites must ever be remembered. Their day had gone by; they were too wicked to be permitted to live.

Glancing through the Scriptures, and tracing God's ways in government with men, His judgments, long threatened, are seen coming at length upon the unrepentant. So it was with the men in Noah's days, after God had given them one hundred and twenty years in which to repent; their day had gone by; the flood came, and swept them all away. So it was with the tribes of Israel, who were warned by the prophets continually; but, though often reprov'd, they hardened themselves, and were swept into captivity, no man to this day knowing whither they are scattered. After the wicked hands of Judah had taken Christ and crucified and slain Him, messages from Himself, risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, were sent them, but they repented not. Hence the terrible word came at last to them, "Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive" (Acts xxviii. 26); and the Jews remain in their wilful unbelief. Thus will it be in the coming day: the Gentiles, to whom now the word of God's salvation is sent, having become wise in their own conceits, and not continuing in His goodness, will be cut off (Rom. xi. 17-25); and at last the wrath of God from heaven will be revealed against the men of apostate Christendom who obey not the gospel. (2 Thess. i. 7-10.)

The sudden and complete overthrow of the Amorites seemed to point to that day, and to the sudden destruction which shall come upon those who cry peace and

safety, for "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." (1 Thess. v. 2.) The mighty intervention of Jehovah, in casting down great hail-stones from heaven, seems a kind of indication of the time "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God." Israel was but the sword of Jehovah: He Himself, in the great stones He cast down upon them, displayed His anger from heaven against the worshippers of demons and their pernicious ways.

Hence, in the day when Jehovah thus wrought in His majesty as "the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth"—even as His priest Melchizedek had declared Him (Gen. xiv. 19)—both sun and moon obeyed the bidding of His servant, until the sinners of Canaan were destroyed. We have but to read God's word in the Book of Revelation to be aware that judgments more terrible and more wonderful are yet to fall upon this earth, and to learn that the Jews, who have turned their backs upon the Christ of God, and the professors in Christendom, who are already doing the same, shall, in the approaching day of the Lord, like these Amorites of old, be forced to drink Jehovah's cup of trembling. And, when the great day of His wrath is come, who shall be able to stand?

Up to the fifteenth verse of the chapter before us, there is a brief account given of that great day of victory we have just considered; from the sixteenth verse to the end of the chapter incidents in Israel's conquest are related. The quotation from the Book of Jasher (the book of the upright) ends at the fifteenth verse, and records two great facts, both of which are again stated at the close

of the chapter. The first great fact is this—"Jehovah fought for Israel," which explains the people's success. The second is this—"And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, into the camp to Gilgal," which gives the key to the subjective state of Israel, showing that Jehovah could be with them in His might.

We now briefly glance at some of the incidents in the conquest. The power of the five kings was suddenly and completely broken. "Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee," the Lord had said to Joshua, who, therefore, came upon them suddenly. Strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, Israel attacked the enemy, "and the Lord discomfited them before Israel." Faith in God gives unquenchable energy to God's people, and faith's victories are the result of God's people carrying out His purposes.

The confederate kings saw only the sword of Israel, but the Israelites wielded that sword at the word of Jehovah. God has work to be done. He communicates His purpose to His people, and, if acting in faith, they simply obey His word. God leads on His servants in the path of obedience, gives them encouraging promises, enables them to believe His faithful word in the face of every seeming impossibility, and then, in answer to their faith, crowns their obedience with complete success. Well may they say, "Thou hast wrought all our works in us." When Joshua bade the sun stand still, he was carrying out the purpose of God, whose power is almighty, and whose bidding both sun and moon obey. The idolaters might cry to the sun and the moon for

help, to Baal and Ashtaroth; but Jehovah the Most High would show to His people that the powers of heaven are merely His servants.

The five kings fled and hid themselves in a cave, where Joshua kept them prisoners, while the judgment of Jehovah overtook their armies. The victory over the multitudes of Canaan was not to be used in a half-and-half kind of way. Success should be but the occasion of fresh effort. In their energy for the Lord, Israel pursued and slew until not a foe remained. Such is the spirit of true Christian warfare: the present vantage is made the base line for advance to further victory; every success, truly regarded, is but an incentive to further conquest.

After the people had returned safe and sound—in peace—to Makkedah, their temporary camp, Joshua ordered the five kings to be brought out, and bidding the captains of the men of war, which went with him, to put their feet on the necks of these kings, he expressed in the most emphatic way, the subjugation of the power of Canaan to the Lord's army. "These kings," these chiefs, these rulers had to bow to Israel, and while Joshua fixed this fact upon Israel's mind, he reiterated the great exhortation which had been the moving spring of their energy: "Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight." A significant lesson to the Christian soldier lies here, who finds in his victories but the confirmation of the sure promises of his God, made at the commencement of the campaign, and also the anticipation of that final

conquest of Satan which is near at hand, for "the God of peace shall bruise [or tread] Satan under your feet shortly." (Rom. xvi. 20.)

The kings conquered and slain, city after city fell rapidly as "the Lord delivered them" into Israel's hands, and thus the whole of the south country, hills, vales and springs, became their possession. "All these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel." It was a very great conquest "at one time," and the consideration of it, can but stir soldiers of Christ to faith and zeal, and to act in implicit obedience to the Lord.

An instructive lesson is to be gathered from the second victory at Hebron (Josh. x. 23 and 36). The king of Hebron was one of the five who had been slain at Makkedah, but a fresh king had been set up in the city. This centre of government, with "all the cities thereof" and "all the souls therein," was now overthrown. In their rapid conquest, Israel had not had time to search out all the hiding-places of the fugitives, who therefore returned, and repeopled and refortified old Hebron; hence it had to be reconquered. And in Christian warfare victory must be thorough. It is not enough to disperse and to scatter foes: the stronghold must be utterly destroyed. Spiritual foes, if baffled or even defeated, are not easily annihilated. Their lurking-places must be sought out, else the enemy recovers his strength and returns to the war with revived activity. No sitting still nor rest is lawful in this strife; spiritual energy and watchfulness need to be incessant, otherwise the wars will have to be fought over and over again.

The campaign over, Joshua and all Israel returned to the camp at Gilgal. And Gilgal must ever be our camp, there is none other. Thither we must return after our victories. Makkedah may avail to witness the destruction of the power of the enemy, but Gilgal witnesses the judgment of self, the power of the cross of Christ on what we are.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Final Victory.

JOSHUA xi., xii.

“The kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him.”—Rev. xix. 19.

THE campaign of the south country accomplished, and the combination of the kings under their “Lord of Righteousness” overthrown, the kings of the north arrayed themselves against Israel, under the leadership of Jabin, King of Hazor. They came in vast host, and pitched together at the waters of Merom. There, at their camp, at the bidding of Jehovah, Israel came suddenly upon them, destroyed their horses, burnt their chariots, and smote their hosts, till none remained. The horses and the chariots were precisely that in which the peoples of Canaan trusted; hence these were to be destroyed lest Israel should confide in such power and forsake confidence in Jehovah. It ever has been God’s way to work deliverances for His people with weapons of war that seem to say, “It is not of might, nor of power, but My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts,” as David’s sling and stone, Samson’s jawbone of the ass, and Gideon’s pitchers and trumpets testify.

The victory at Merom (high place) led to the fall of Hazor, the fortress, for "at that time" Joshua "turned back" and burned it, and slew its king. That city of strength had been the head of those kingdoms. Jabin, the wise or the intelligent—the official title of its kings (see Judges iv. 2)—had ruled therefrom, and this centre of government was now utterly destroyed. This turning back and burning of Hazor is a distinct action on the part of Joshua. He laid low the head as well as the rank and file of the opposing foe.

At this time we find the mountain of Israel mastered, and Israel laying hold in all the land, hills, valleys, and plains. A fair grip was gained of all the land, in all its varied characteristics. Yet it is added, and "Joshua made war a long time with all those kings;" for in the victories God gives He usually teaches His people endurance and hardship, and thus works patience in them. For some seven years did these wars last (see xiv. 7, 10), a period which has its significance, as has already been mentioned.

The people of the land were judicially hardened and blinded. "It was of the Lord . . . that they might have no favour, but that He might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses," for, as we have already observed, their day of grace was passed by. Thus it will be in the day that is coming, when the Intelligence and the Strength—the Jabin and the Hazor—of modern infidelity will rise up against Christ. For the sure word of prophecy has gone out, as the word went out concerning these Canaanites by Moses: "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had

pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12), and they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come" (i. 9, 10).

A practical word relative to Christian warfare is added here, "At that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains." It will be remembered how the terror of the giants stood in the way of Israel gaining their possession when at Eshcol. Now these terrible foes were cut off from fastness and from city, and with their strongholds were utterly destroyed. When God's soldiers apprehend His strength, the giants fall before them. It is well always to be in our own eyes as grasshoppers, yes, to be less than the least, to be nothing, for when we are weak then are we strong; but it is well always to measure the enemy's might against the Almighty, and to go to war not only for the Lord, but entirely in His strength, and, when this is so, "at that time" the giants will fall.

With the destruction of Israel's first great object of terror, the giants, the note of final victory is sounded; "So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war."

With the statement that the whole land had been taken by Joshua, according to all the Lord said unto Moses, the enumeration of the kings smitten and the country conquered by Israel is given. The conquests on both sides of the Jordan are stated; "on the other

side Jordan" the land was possessed, on this side it was given "unto the tribes of Israel for a possession."

There was rest from war, since the power of the enemy was broken; but the possession of the inheritance would depend upon future energy. According to the assurance given upon the passage of the Jordan, the living God had driven out the nations, the cities walled to heaven and the dreaded giants had fallen, the inhabitants of mountains, valleys, and plains, had been vanquished. Henceforth it was for Israel so to act in obedience to Jehovah, that His promise of casting out the shattered nations before them by slow degrees should be accomplished.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Call from Jehovah to incite Israel to possess.

JOSHUA xiii.

"There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed."—
JOSH. xiii. 1.

THE second section of the Book before us commences with the Lord's word to Joshua, "Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." Much, very much, land had to be seized and subdued, and the weakness of old age had stricken the great leader.

As we open the thirteenth chapter of our Book, we breathe another atmosphere from that in which we found ourselves when reading its first exhortations; we are face to face with new difficulties—not the iron chariots of the Canaanite, not the cities walled to heaven, not the giants of the mountains, but foes harder to overcome, even sloth and ease-seeking in the army of the Lord.

The exhortation of the Lord, at this point in Israel's history, is very different from that with which the Book began, for, after describing "the land that yet remaineth,"

Jehovah says to His aged servant, "I," emphatically, "I will drive them out." Joshua may lose vigour, great leaders may become infirm, but the Lord remains ever the same. If the saints did but look to God and not to leaders, they would prosper even when deprived of such by death. Not that true leaders should be made light of, for they are God's gifts to His people; but for all that, to God must His saints look. Israel held on to God so long as Joshua, and the elders who outlived him, led them to confide in God; even, as in the early days of Christianity, the saints clung to Christ while Paul and such as he were among them; but Joshuas and Pauls die, and the only confidence for God's people must be God Himself. Therefore, in the divine assurance, "I will drive them out," and in commending ourselves "to God, and to the word of His grace" (Acts xx. 32), is courage found to set up our banner.

The energetic conquering leader, now the aged servant of Jehovah, was bidden divide the land amongst the tribes of Israel. All of it, the portions conquered and unconquered, were assigned to Israel, and described as their inheritance. God had promised, and He would perform. Would Israel fulfil their part, in faith and obedience to Jehovah's word? In passing, it should be observed how well and wisely Joshua in his old age adapts his service to his years. The grand object of his life was victory; and when he was too aged to lead the army, he led the whole nation to God's thoughts respecting the lengths and breadths of their inheritance, so that Israel might be stimulated to arise and possess. In Joshua the spirit of the true leader is seen—that spirit which, while urging on God's people in His

ways, ever centres their courage and confidence in God Himself.

By no means was all the land of promise inherited. The two and a half tribes—the half of Manasseh and the tribes of Reuben and Gad—inherited their possessions on the other side Jordan; and two and a half more tribes, the other half of Manasseh (Josh. xvii.), Ephraim (chap. xvi.), and Judah (chap. xv.), “inherited in the land of Canaan” (chap. xiv. 1); the remainder of the tribes, seven in number, possessed not, but had their portions according to lot as it was “described by cities into seven parts in a book” (chap. xviii.). Thus seven out of the twelve tribes of Israel did not possess their portion; while of those who did possess, whether “on this” or on the “other side of Jordan,” we read, “they expelled not,” “could not drive out,” or, “drave not out,” the inhabitants who “would dwell” among them. Hence the second part of the Book of Joshua describes a state eminently critical for Israel, and full of suggestive warning for the children of God at large, for it is written, “then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord.” God had brought Israel into Canaan, and had broken the power of the enemy, but the prosperity of Israel already trembled in the balance; upon themselves had devolved the responsibility of maintaining their position by future conquests, of retaining by a fresh gaining: a principle never to be forgotten, but one too rarely acted upon.

The full force of the Lord’s words, “There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed,” will not be gained save by occupying His standpoint, and looking therefrom at the lengths and breadths of the possession.

In the things of God, Christians are apt to take the standard of their Christianity from the state of their own village or city, and not from the divine standpoint of all spiritual blessings being ours in Christ. Thus Israel regarded the land of promise from the result of what they had captured thereof, and not from its actual lengths and breadths. But northward and southward, toward the sunrising, and toward the country of the Sidonians, Jehovah saw possessions which He had given to Israel still untrodden, and cities and villages not held nor lived in. Jehovah was not satisfied that His people should lose the enjoyment of their blessings, therefore He again promised them His support, and gave Israel His emphatic "*I will drive them out.*"

Could Israel have seen the lengths and breadths of the promised land as Jehovah saw them, would they have been slothful to possess? But their eyes were off God's view of their blessings, and fixed upon their present enjoyment. Did they believe what those seven portions were that were written in the book, each having peculiar reference to the seven tribes who had not received their inheritance, they must have arisen to further victory. But they arose not. Israel in Canaan is an ensample to Christians in the heavenly places in Christ, and Israel's sloth a warning to Christians to whom it is written, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. v. 14.) In the epistle, which of all others most gloriously describes the wealth of the Christian's spiritual possessions according to God the Father's own great counsels in Christ, we have this exhortation to awake and to arise. Even where all spiritual blessings are described

as his in Christ, the Christian is found asleep among the dead, his eyes closed to his portion, and his soul in darkness thereto. "Awake, arise, and Christ shall shine upon thee"! are words of the most solemn import. The idea that individuals, or associations of Christians, can retain what they or their fathers won by fighting and endurance, save by fighting and endurance, is utterly vain. If we settle down to enjoy our spiritual portion or position, we have already lost the grip of the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; and we shall find, as did Israel, that the idea of remaining stationary in divine things is a delusion, and that the dream of such enjoyments ends in an awakening to discover the loss of what had been gained, and to learn that our souls are in captivity.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Most Sacred Inheritance.

JOSHUA xiii. 14 and 33.

“That I may know Him.”—PHIL. iii. 10.

THE countries which the children of Israel inherited in Canaan were settled by Jehovah by lot, and distributed by the high priest and the leader of Israel, the heads of the tribes conveying the Lord's directions to the people.

Levi's peculiar portion is first to be considered: “Unto the tribe of Levi He gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance, as He said unto them” (xiii. 14). The Lord God of Israel was their inheritance (xiii. 33). Levi was “scattered in Israel,” according to the prophecy of Jacob; but Levi's portion was the most sacred and the most precious of all. Wherever the other tribes dwelt, there was Levi; wherever the devout spirits in Israel worshipped the Lord, there Levi had his inheritance. The Lord—not a position—was Levi's lot: “The Lord God of Israel is their inheritance.” And so it is that the happiest and wealthiest Christians are they who find in the Lord Himself their portion. Whether dwelling among the two and a half tribes on the other side

Jordan, or among the nine and a half in Canaan, not the special position of the land where their cities were, but Jehovah Himself, and the sacrifices made by fire to him, were Levi's inheritance. "The breadth, and length, and depth, and height" (Eph. iii. 18) are most truly comprehended by those Christians who have most of Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith; by those who, like Levi, have the Lord Himself and the sacrifices as their conscious portion. It is well to fight the giants and to overcome cities; but it is better to sacrifice burnt offerings and to partake of peace offerings, to worship God and to hold communion with Him concerning the Lord Jesus.

Levi's portion, in one sense, could never be assailed either by the dweller in the land or by the foreign foe; for even in the darkest day of Israel's departure, when the people of God had betaken themselves to caves and holes in the earth for fear of the enemy, Levi could look up to the unclouded heavens, and exclaim to Jehovah, "Thou art my portion and the lot of my inheritance." Yet in another sense, Levi would be the first to suffer in the day of Israel's adversity, for the sacrifices of Israel were Levi's portion, and these would fail when the foe held Israel captive. And so it is, those nearest to Christ, while they rejoice in a portion that can never be removed, and which never can vary, are the first to feel, in all its acuteness, the spiritual poverty of saints or their affliction by the enemy.

Israel, responsible to maintain their possession in Canaan, might and did utterly fail; the heathen and the idols might and did obtain the mastery over them; but the unchangeable God was Levi's inheritance, and

wherever the spirit of worship to Him arose in any of Israel, and sacrifices by fire were offered to Him, there Levi had his inheritance.

With the material blessings of Israel before our eye—their land flowing with milk and honey, and fed with depths springing out of valleys and hills—it is not difficult to discern the peculiar position occupied by Levi. And, spiritually understood, in the Levites' inheritance is seen the believer's most perfect portion; for, while we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ, while we have in Him pleasures bestowed upon us for evermore, we have, beyond all blessings which are conferred upon us through or in Christ, the Lord Himself. Indeed, believers are brought into the blessings of Christianity that they may delight in Christ. God has saved and brought His people to Himself, for no less an end than that of their being like the Lord and knowing Him as they are known. (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) God's grace towards us reaches beyond deliverance from wrath and entrance into life. Therefore, while we contemplate His mercy—the forgiveness of sins, redemption of Christ, death and resurrection with Christ—it is for us to reach forth, in order that we may realize and abide in our nearest and highest portion. "That I may know Him" (Phil. iii. 10), is the high aim of the energy of the new life.

When the Lord is seen, by faith, in his excellence, the glory of his light dims everything else. Saul of Tarsus saw His face brighter than the noonday sun, and thenceforth Saul was for heaven. The Lord in the heavens instructed him not only concerning the glory, but opened to him the wonder of His own heart there.

It is well to consider our unchangeable God and our unvarying portion in Him before we dwell on the failure of God's people in general, either to lay firm hold of the conquered portions of the land, or to advance and conquer the portions still unpossessed. Let the Lord Himself fill the heart, and the possessions will be obtained, but where possessions are the object and not the Lord, the soul is dry and unprofitable, and the hard and unprofitable soul soon loses conscious grip of its possessions.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A Noble Sample of the True Inheritor.

JOSHUA xiv. 5-15.

“In nothing terrified by your adversaries.”—PHIL. 1. 28.

It is not without purpose that the divinely-inspired historian places on record the bright and brave spirit of the true possessor before detailing the extent and the boundaries of the inheritance of the nine and a half tribes in the land of Canaan. The soul requires fire within, strength and courage in God; and with these we shall make our own what God has given us.

From the fourteenth to the end of the nineteenth chapter we read of the apportioning of Canaan to the nine and a half tribes. The incident of the noble purpose of Caleb to possess Hebron introduces this important history.

These nine and a half tribes had to make their own foothold in their inheritance, though the situation of their possessions was determined by Jehovah Himself; “By lot was their inheritance,” but upon themselves, as upon the Christian in spiritual things, depended their foothold of the possession. Israel had reached that stage in their history in Canaan when they stood where the two ways of slothfulness and of earnestness

met. At this stage how many would be Calebs? How many would be true possessors who would arise and pursue the path of earnestness to victory?

“As the Lord commanded . . . the children of Israel did . . . they divided the land” (ver. 5), and then it was to Joshua, at the camp of Gilgal—Gilgal with its grand associations of Jehovah-given freedom—that the men of Judah came. Caleb stood up before the leader and all Israel, and, in the burning spirit of the true possessor, put in his claim to the mountains of Hebron, and the great and fenced cities thereof.

Caleb's words must have stirred every faithful soul as, addressing Joshua, he said, “Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea.” The Lord was the same unchangeable Lord to Caleb, though forty-five years had gone by, and a new dispensation had arisen for Israel; and though Caleb's old associates were dead and gone—buried, because of their unbelief, in the wilderness, for he alone believed in the faithful promise of the Lord. Forty-five years previously, in the dark hour of Israel's rebellion against Jehovah, Caleb had stood firm for his God. When the faint-hearted spies urged the people to unbelief, brave Caleb stayed himself upon God, and, regardless of the favour of his old associates, he answered their mean and unbelieving words by “Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it,” while, to the wails and despondency of Israel, his firm heart answered, “If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.” (Numbers xiv. 8.)

The Lord had said of him in that day: "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it" (ver. 24). Caleb's faith lifted him out of the murmurs of Israel, their cowardice and their reproaches of the Lord. He trusted in God, held on to Him and left in His hands difficulties and giants; one thing only he sought—the Lord's delight in him.

And Moses swore on that day, and promised Caleb the land whereon his feet had trodden. God grant His people the courage to put down their feet upon His promises, for every one shall be made good.

From that day in Kadesh-barnea Caleb occupied a peculiar position in Israel. In the darkest hours of the wilderness, in the dreariest nights of Israel's wanderings, amid pestilence and divine displeasure, Caleb was sustained by the promise of his God. He had to suffer with the unbelieving host, to be afflicted with them (which principles are as true to-day as then, for all suffer together, and the unbelief and rebellion of one affects others); but while Israel's warriors might perish, Caleb knew that his feet should stand upon the mountains of Hebron; and while thousands might die at his right hand, Caleb knew that his family should possess the great and fenced cities of the children of Anak, for the Lord had said it.

Caleb is an example to us in our day of weakness and murmuring. In him we behold a sample of the finest qualities of Christian soldiership: whole-heartedness for God, unabated strength through God, and continual dependence on God. Forty-five years of habitual reliance

on God had not elated his soul in his old age to self-reliance, nor had forty-five years of God's continued favour in any wise diminished in Caleb the sense that in God alone is our strength, as his words declare: "If so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said." How this noble possessor shames the feeble, nerveless soul! To have lived for thirty-eight years in a very chorus of murmurings and yet still to sing "the Lord is my strength and my song," is a miracle indeed, and a miracle it was, as Caleb owned, "And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as He said." "*As He said*"; three great words, greater than the accumulated murmurings of all Israel for eight and thirty years; "*As He said*," for Caleb had not dropped down like other men of war and died.

All his wilderness way, and all his soldier life, the Lord's delight in His people was Caleb's source of courage—courage which, when he was eighty-five years of age, impelled him to battle with the families of the giants of Canaan with ardour equal to that which had enabled him, when he was forty years old, to withstand greater giants than they, even the murmuring and unbelief of Israel. "Now therefore," said he, "give me this mountain," for "I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in." Few soldiers of Christ can so speak. Too many an aged Christian soldier seems to regard his long term of service as a plea for immunity from that hourly dependence on God, which at the first won him his victories; and "if the Lord be with us" becomes exchanged for the vainglorious and the degenerate, "I

will go out as at other times before, and shake myself." (Judges xvi. 20.)

Joshua blessed Caleb as he spoke ; and a special blessing from Christ, our Leader, rests upon every Caleb-like Christian. The Lord honoured Caleb's dependence on Himself ; He drove thence the three sons of Anak and smote Kirjath-arba, and restored to the city its old name of Hebron, which associated the locality with the father of the faithful, and not with the great man among the giants.

Caleb is a name of rude signification, for it means a whelp. Some regard this as an index to his faithfulness, for as the dog follows his master, so did Caleb follow the Lord with true purpose ; some regard the name as indicating the special glory of Judah, for, "Judah is a lion's whelp." (Gen. xlix. 9.) Be the true significance of his name what it may, Caleb, the faithful man, had his portion in the great inheritance of Judah—"Praise." And thus it is to this day in things spiritual among God's soldiers ; faithful men dwell in praise, yes, and "they shall be still praising Thee." His brave spirit arose to its greatness among the murmurs of Israel, and he inherited in the noblest portion of the promised land ; God, as it were, granting to the man who spoke well of His Name in the place of murmurings a home in the land of Praise.

The Spirit of God wakes a joy-note after recording Caleb's faith and victory, "And the land had rest from war." When a Great-heart rises up in the church of God and smites the giants, there is rest from war.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

How the Mass of the People Inherited.

JOSHUA xv., xvi., xvii.

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”—1 Cor. xvi. 13.

Ch. xv.
1-15. JUDAH’S lot—the royal tribe, for whom the Lord ordered a royal portion, the noblest and the greatest in Israel—is mentioned first. As it has been observed, Judah’s inheritance “was placed on elevated ground, that it might be more conspicuous than the others, until the sceptre should arise from it.” Moreover, in Judah’s lot was the seat of the future kingdom—Jerusalem; for, in the ways of God, no lot which He orders is determined save with the definite purpose of bringing glory to His Son. Whether in valleys or in mountains, Judah’s cities are numerous, and the detailed account of them marks off this part of the inheritance from the rest of the tribes. The abundance and the fruitfulness of the possession, thus described, teach that God’s gifts to His people are marked by their munificence.

Ch. xv.
16-19. Caleb’s name arising again in the enumeration of Judah’s cities, recalls the courage and zeal

in possessing in which God delights. Caleb's burning heart for victory fired others. His warrior-soul induced others to great deeds—a grand characteristic, which marks the great overcomers for God in all ages. To Othniel, Caleb's nephew, fell Kirjath-sepher (the City of Books), evidently some seat of learning; and upon its capture Achsah, Caleb's daughter, became the victor's wife. These cousins were worthy descendants of their race; the one maintained the excellence of the home, the other acquired land from the enemy. Where the springs of water in the home, and the sword abroad, are united—where the wisdom that provides the living waters for the flocks, and the courage which conquers the enemy, abide together—the true spirit of possessing is found. Never should the refreshment so necessary for a sunny south land be forgotten. Waters for the high and the low places should not be neglected, the pastures or vineyards should not be left uncared for, the upper springs and the nether springs must be sought; for the true possessor, practically speaking, of divine blessings is he who is as careful to cultivate what he has won as he is brave to conquer what is yet to be possessed. Achsah leaped not from her ass for nothing, requesting gifts of Caleb, her father; and her eager practical spirit, spiritually speaking, is a lesson to all.

Ch. xv. 63. Great as was the lot of Judah, it is melancholy to read at the close of its description—“As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day;” and in these words are chronicled the

opening of Israel's failure to possess, and the beginning of the history of their loss of liberty. Let spiritual enemies get a stronghold in an individual heart, or amongst a company of Christians, and sooner or later, as the Jebusites did in David's day—man their walls with lame and blind, and taunt the king (2 Sam. v. 6-10)—so will spiritual enemies defy God's saints.

"They could not drive them out!" The note has been struck, its tone will increase in volume, it will repeat itself again and again, until the sound of victory be swallowed up in the cries of defeat and loss and in the wails of bondage and ruin.

Ch. xvi. 1.9. The lot of the children of Joseph came after Judah's, another instance of God's hand so ordering Israel's inheritance that his word to the patriarchs should be fulfilled. The distinctness and the breadth of Judah's lot are absent in the lands and cities portioned to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, and also there is an intermingling of their lots, which is difficult to explain. The want of carrying out God's purpose by these tribes is again apparent. "The separate cities . . . of Ephraim were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh," "And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher."

Ch. xvi. 10. The feebleness of the Ephraimites, as that of their brethren of Judah, is noted, "They drove not out the Canaanites . . . but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute."

Ch. xvii. 1-6. With the slackness and want of courage now apparent, it is cheering to read of a warrior having a goodly heritage, "because he was a man of

war"; for the family of Machir was brave, and so conquests fell to it; thus the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Machir, acquired their portion according to promise.

Ch. xvii.
7-13. The cities of Manasseh are next enumerated, and once more the refrain is heard, "Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities . . . did not utterly drive them out" (v. 12, 13). "Yet it came to pass when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute." Their strength exposed the secret of their inability, they "could not," because they "would not" drive them out; they preferred to make a gain of these heathen rather than obey God; and so it happened that, after a time, Israel learned all the abominations of the Canaanites, and served them as a punishment for their sins. The shortsighted principle of making terms with the enemy, in disobedience to God, ended in the tributaries becoming thorns in their eyes and pricks in their sides, and at last their masters. When faith in God, with its arduous life, is exchanged for compromise with evil and for a course of self-seeking, the reaping day will discover, by its sorrowful fruits, the bitterness of departing from God.

Putting false things under tribute is a common practice in the church of God, but trifling with evil will result in eventual ruin and misery. Spiritual foes placed under tribute will, as did these Canaanites, assert their right to rule. Do not we see in Christendom "the rudiments of the world," "the commandments and traditions of men," "worshipping of angels," "philosophy and vain deceit," under tribute? Do not we see Christian men

suffering known iniquity in their communities, and allowing in their midst persons and practices which are enemies to God? Winking at evil, pandering to sin, smoothing over the false doctrines or practice of favourite leaders—is but putting the enemy under tribute. Such disloyalty to the Lord ever ends in the tributaries mastering the people of God and enslaving them.

“The Canaanites would dwell in that land” (ver. 12). Decision and purpose are marked here. The saints may fail in earnestness, but the enemy will not fail herein.

Ch. xvii. Having given in all its vividness the secret
14-18. of their failure, the inspired historian next presents the pretension of the children of Joseph. In them the old man-of-war energy was supplanted by inflation, due to historic memories. The faith in God, which, while making a man nothing in his own eyes makes him great in his deeds, was exchanged for the “I-am-a-great-people” doctrine! “Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the Lord has blessed me hitherto.” Regarded numerically the Josephites are a “great people” in our own times. We meet with them everywhere. They boast of the holiness and faith of their fathers, or even of their own faith in the bygone “old times”; ancient victories, and a good old history are inscribed upon their banners, and, indeed, so grand and great are they, that their Mount Ephraim “is too narrow for” them. Surely they should be accredited, because of what their fathers and their founders were! But the past is passed, and the assumption of present greatness because of bygone victories, but a bubble. Faith in God is faith in the living God, and faith in God

means living this day in overcoming power in His Name. "If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants." "Up, O great people! and prove your words by your deeds; get ye up, O proud boasters in your fathers' faith and deeds, and prove this day your own faith, by deeds of hardship and of courage! Cut down the woods, and cultivate the wastes for God; cut down the giants, and free the land from His enemies. Visit the sick, the dying; preach the gospel to the enemies of God; awake from vainglorious dreaming, and arise to the reality of hardship for the Lord. Behold the most difficult places: let them be your points of attack, and cut down for yourself there! Look to yourselves, to your own ways, be no more men of words, but men of deeds for God."

Then the Josephites said, "The hill is not enough for us." Virgin soil and wooded districts sufficed not for them! they wanted the easy and the prepared, as did the Corinthians in their day. These were great enough in words, and grand enough in reigning as kings; but Paul, the apostle, that great cutter down for himself, reminded them that true greatness measures not itself by itself, but toils on and conquers new regions for the Lord. (2 Cor. x. 12-16.)

These Josephites, so great in words, eschewed the axe and feared the sword, saying, "all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron." However, Joshua allowed them no departure from their first words; "Thou art," says he, "a great people, and hast great power," "the mountain shall be thine; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down." So

may we be sure the Lord Jesus Christ takes us up according to our profession. If we are such wonderful people, so great as we profess, then let us "cut down for ourselves;" if we have so much power, that among the tribes there is none like unto Ephraim, then "thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots and though they be strong."

"Cut down for thyself!" Former victories are not power to-day. Nay, boasting of the past is but evidence of weakness in the present. "The Lord hath blessed me hitherto" is no proof of the hand of the Lord being with us for blessing to-day. If the believer be building on the past, he is building on the blessing, and not on the Lord. To-day "cut down for thyself," prove the Lord's might by present faith in Him. The experience of the past is but a motive to encourage ourselves in the Lord to-day. "Cut down for thyself," "in the land of the giants;" let their names be Deadness, Indifference, Worldliness, Iniquity, Superstition, Atheism, or what they may be. "Cut down for thyself," ye Josephites of this nineteenth century.

God's way for His people to enlarge their borders is by driving out the enemies. Aggressive Christianity, the winning of souls, following on to know the Lord, daily victories of faith, alone leads to true possession. Cut down the woods, and plant in the barren places the truths of the gospel; and, instead of lamenting the smallness of the openings for usefulness in our lot, arise, and in God's strength, by sword and axe cut down the giants and widen the borders.

The Holy Spirit of God has surely for our admonition placed the spirit of Caleb at the beginning, and that of

these Josephites at the end, of the record of Israel's inheriting Canaan. Are we like Caleb, or like the Josephites? Like the one brave man of war, who stood alone for God amongst his murmuring brethren, or like the multitudes whose name and numbers were their credentials. We may be sure of this, the noble and brave warriors who spend and are spent for Christ, who toil on, day in day out, patiently praying, earnestly working, grasping the word, striving for souls, are those whom our Joshua blesses, while the boasters in their traditions and in the memories of their fathers' deeds, receive from Him but these words, "Thou art a great people," then "cut down for thyself."

CHAPTER XXIX.

Peace and Worship.

JOSHUA xviii. 1.

“The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.”—JOHN iv. 23.

A NEW era now arises in Israel's history. Instead of Gilgal, the camp, Shiloh, the place of worship, becomes the centre for the people. It is now no longer the place of God-made liberty, where the reproach of Egypt is rolled off, but the place chosen of God for the tabernacle of the congregation to stand. The camp, with its self-denial and its hardship, is exchanged for peace and worship.

Standing in God-made liberty, and not being slack in self-denial; we go forth to spiritual warfare, and so become possessors practically of our God-bestowed portion in Christ; and this spirit leads to the further step of worship. Shiloh signifies “peace” or “rest”; and Israel, having conquered a large amount of their inheritance, and being at rest (for “the land was subdued before them”), set up the tabernacle of the congregation in that place which the Lord had chosen to put His Name there. (Deut. xii. 11.)

At Gilgal the Lord rolled off the reproach from Israel and made His people His freed men; at Ebal He established His word in the promised land, and laid Israel under obedience to His laws; at Shiloh He established His Name in their midst, and dwelt among them. God makes the peace, and, blessed in the peace He has made, His saints worship Him. His hand produces the rest in which alone His people can dwell with Him, and He among them.

Shiloh was situated nearly in the centre of Israel's inheritance, and, if we regard Shiloh (peace) as a figure to us of Christ, who is our peace, remembering that one of His names is Shiloh (Gen. xlix. 10), we find at once the true Centre of all the vast circle of God's saints, in the fulness of their spiritual possessions.

At Shiloh were the one altar and the one tabernacle, Israel's centre; around this divinely-appointed centre the circle of the twelve tribes was drawn. The extent of the circle would be according to the multitude of the children of Israel, the centre itself could never vary. Thither would each faithful heart of the vast congregation turn, as surely as every compass points to the pole. Christ is God's centre for His people, and around Him is the circle of all His redeemed—"Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. xlix. 10.) Christ alone is the object of each heart's adoration. God has given no other attraction for His saints. Christ will be the centre in the glory; and even now upon the earth, despite all the divisions of language and of race, yes, and of creeds and "isms," Jesus only is the centre for His people.

Israel's tabernacle was the common inheritance of the

nation; the chief of the fathers and the humblest of the Israelites alike worshipped there, for Jehovah's one people they were, and He dwelt among them.

There could be no divinely-owned association of the tribes, save where the glory of God was—at Shiloh. Every true association of the saints of God has His presence, and fellowship of heart and purpose in His presence; “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.” (1 John i. 7.) Christ is the only centre of true fellowship among those who are united to Him and to each other, and true fellowship among Christians only exists so far as this is practically recognized. Christians are now God's circle upon the earth, of which Christ is the centre. God has made them, though many, one body by His Spirit, who dwells in them; and so long as Christ is really and truly the practical centre of God's saints, unity amongst themselves, holiness, peace, and the joy of worshipping the Father result. Let Christ be lost sight of as the centre, and, lo! Shiloh becomes but a name, a memory of bygone days. Shiloh now is strewn with stones, one of the waste places on the earth, a solemn remembrance of glory, worship, and peace of departed years.

The tabernacle was Jehovah's tent, or dwelling place; and since Israel was His chosen nation, it was “the tabernacle of the congregation”—the tent of the meeting of the people and God. They were not only established in the place of God's appointment, surrounding Him according to the principles of His word, but they were associated with God and He with them. His Name demanded holiness in them, obedience from them,

practical godliness and a national life, such as He could smile upon. Alas, how Israel's history comments upon Israel's disobedience! Jehovah's changeless holiness is written upon the ruins of Shiloh. Its desolation is an eloquent testimony to the divine displeasure against departure from Himself. "Go ye now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My Name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel." (Jer. vii. 12.) Yet each of the three hundred and fifty years and more that the ark remained there declares the Lord's great patience with His rebellious people! God will ever keep His truth, but He has made His saints the caretakers thereof; if, then, His people dishonour Him, He will scatter them, and they will lose their place of trust. As we ponder over the suggestive history of Shiloh, let us take heed to the word of our God, "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, are these. . . . Is this house, which is called by My Name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord." (Jer. vii. 4, 11.)

But Shiloh foretells a brighter day to come. It speaks of the gathering together of the scattered tribes of Israel to the Christ they now reject. It has also its encouragement for the Christian believer. We find, declared in the seventeenth of St. John's Gospel, the union of the family of God's children. First, the apostolic unity, which nothing did sever; secondly, the general unity of grace; thirdly, the unity of glory. Practical union, displayed upon the earth, is a testimony to the world, and to this responsibility attaches

itself; but there shall be union displayed in the glory when this day of divisions is no more. In the coming day of peace and rest, the one undivided company of the family of God shall behold the glory of the Lord Jesus, which the Father has given Him. Then all hearts shall be united eternally; then all desires shall be fixed undistractedly upon Christ; then the saints "shall all see eye to eye." Then the whole of God's rich blessings shall be the portion of the whole of God's people. Then rest from war shall be the portion of all, and, in the sunshine of cloudless peace, in the glory of God, shall our Shiloh be. The tabernacle of God shall be with men! (See Rev. xxi.)

CHAPTER XXX.

The Last Call to Possess.

JOSHUA xviii., xix.

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."—2 TIM. ii. 3.

THE peace God had given Israel enabled them to assemble at His call in Shiloh, and from Shiloh arose Joshua's last exhortation to the nation to possess what God had given them—"How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?" God had said, "I will not fail thee;" but Israel had relaxed in energy, lost grasp of the promise, and had become slothful. Warnings as to the consequences of slackness were subsequently given, but never again such an exhortation to possess. The last call had come. Let the believer take warning lest he sink slowly down into spiritual inertness; lest call upon call to him to awake and arise be neglected, and at length the last appeal be made in vain, and his career of victory end.

"There remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance." (Josh. xviii. 2.) Out of the twelve, merely two and a half tribes inherited in Canaan, and two and a half had

their possessions on the other side Jordan ; hence, despite mighty victories, the feebleness of the mass is apparent.

Joshua bade three men from each tribe go Ch. xviii. 4. forth from Shiloh, walk through the land, and describe it. "Ye shall therefore describe the land into seven parts, and bring the description hither to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord our God" (ver. 6). So the land was surveyed, and the result recorded in a book, and laid before Jehovah in Shiloh. There were lots cast before the Lord for them (ver. 10) ; His purpose, as He had promised the fathers, for His people was proved, the land was divided "unto the children of Israel according to their divisions." These divisions are enumerated (see ver. 11 of chap. xviii. to end of ver. 48, chap. xix.). Speaking generally, Israel's portion was stored up in the book before the Lord ; the seven tribes did not make their inheritance their own, according to the spirit of the exhortation in which Canaan was entered.

While this fact declares loudly the inertness and unbelief of the nation, it finds its echo in the slackness of soul of those of God's saints who are content to know that their portion is in "the book," and, satisfied that it is recorded for them, are too slow of soul "to go to possess." Israel knew exactly what belonged to them, for the unpossessed land was minutely set out, and the districts so described were divided among the tribes ; but it is one thing to know our portion, another to dwell in it. Even in Israel's palmyest days—the time of Solomon—the land was not entirely occupied.

In things spiritual, there is all the difference between knowing and possessing. Possessing means practically

driving out the enemy, and dwelling in the power of what is known. Great was the difference between Israel's hearing the cities of their inheritance detailed to them at Shiloh, and dwelling in them.

To be "slack to go to possess" our spiritual inheritance, the wonders of which are in some measure known to us, is slighting the favours of God.

Every day was a day lost in which Israel allowed the enemy to continue in his strongholds, or return from his hiding-places and re-establish himself in the land; and each such day rendered more difficult the going "to possess" which was incumbent upon them. And while every step in true devotedness to God is real positive gain, every day spent in spiritual idleness is a fresh difficulty to be overcome. The Christian should address himself to steady, persistent energy of soul; he should cultivate habitual earnestness, and that spirit which turns to heavenly things without effort.

How have those soldiers of Christ whom we know as His mighty men of valour, and see acting in the vigour of His Spirit, attained their spiritual strength? The young men, who had overcome the wicked one, (1 John ii. 13) were once "babes"; they did not learn to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ," without training. St. Paul tells us that he kept under his body, and brought it into subjection (1 Cor. ix. 26, 27), and, even in him, greater spiritual strength is observable towards the end of his course than at the beginning. The inertness of our nature, its utter inaptitude to divine things, nay, its contrariety of tastes and desires, added to the attractions to our senses of the exterior world, are used by the adversary to dwarf our growth "in grace, and in the

knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and to conduce to our "slackness." But as a soldier may invigorate his companions, so may the soldier of Christ help his comrades; and we are told to exhort one another daily, and so much the more as we see the day approaching. "Add to your faith virtue," *i.e.*, courage, valour! (2 Peter i. 5.)

Let the example of Paul, the apostle, appeal to us. He was determined to know nothing amongst the contentious Corinthians but Christ and Him crucified; men were as nothing in his estimation, when he faced the enemy who was leading captive the Galatian Christians; Christ's glories were all to him when he warned the Colossians of the foe; and he shunned not, to be solitary in Asia for Christ's sake. Nothing was allowed to move him, his soldier-spirit was ever firm, and true to Christ.

We speak of Israel's possessing their land flowing with milk and honey, but that land gives a feeble idea of the heavenly places, and of their spiritual abundance. The Canaanitish foes resemble the Christian's spiritual enemies only in measure. The natural type is insufficient to convey the spiritual reality to the mind; language fails to express the deep feelings of the heart, for it is the Spirit only who searches the deep things of God, and that Spirit only who reveals them to us. (1 Cor. ii. 10.) But Israel is an ensample and warning, to which the Christian is bidden take heed. (Chap. x. 11.) The land having been made over to Israel, and divided to each tribe according to the order the Lord saw well, the people "gave an inheritance to Joshua, the son of Nun, among them," and thus ended the apportioning of the inheritance.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Cities of Refuge.

JOSHUA XX.

“We might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”—HEB. vi. 18.

THE land being subdued under Israel (ch. xii.), the worship of Jehovah established in its centre (ch. xviii. 1), and all the tribes having their inheritance apportioned to them, the Lord ordered that provision should be made to maintain His land guiltless of innocent blood. Cities of refuge were appointed, to which he who slew a man through ignorance and without intention might flee from the avenger of blood, who, according to the habit of the East, would pursue and kill the manslayer.

These cities, which were six in number, offered a gracious provision for him who had slain his neighbour without intention. Six characterizes human imperfection, falling short of the well-known Bible sign of perfection—seven. And as they stood, three in number, (Deut. xix. 2), on either side of the Jordan (Josh. xx. 7, 8), on both sides of the river was established full testimony by God to His mercy. Look which way we will we can but see our own utter sin and imperfection, yet where sin

abounds grace much more abounds, and the mercy of God extends to all.

In the land of promise these cities stood, each on a hill, for all eyes to see, and with high roads leading to them, so laid out that there could be no difficulty in finding the way. The gates of the cities of refuge were always open, that "Every slayer may flee thither." (Deut. xix. 3.)

When the slayer found the shelter of the city of refuge, the judges were to hear his cause in the acknowledged place of administering justice—the gate; and if it were shown that he smote not his neighbour wittingly, nor hated him before time, then the slayer found an asylum within the walls. However, while the manslayer's life was thus secured his inheritance was forfeited so long as he dwelt within the city of refuge. He was but a refugee under protection. Upon "the death of the high priest that shall be in those days" his position was entirely changed; for, with the succession of another high priest, the slayer received full forgiveness for his deed of blood, absolute freedom, and restoration to his inheritance. He might "return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled."

Why is it that upon the whole land being distributed amongst the tribes, and the Name of the Lord in His tabernacle being the established centre for His people, mention is made of these cities of refuge, and the gracious provision for the manslayer? In the principles of righteousness that God demands at the hands of His people, and in His care that the land should not be defiled by blood, we can find an answer; but beyond

this there is the typical teaching of these cities, and the death of the high priest, which cannot fail also to command our attention.

Eighteen hundred years ago the manslayer lifted up his hand, innocent blood was shed, and from that day the land of Canaan has been defiled by the blood of Jesus. The manslayer has lost his inheritance, he has fled from his own city; the Jews are banished from their land. Strangers dwell in the lots which Jehovah apportioned to the tribes; the possession is forfeited, and, to appearance, lost. But within the veil, in the heavenly sanctuary, the High Priest dwells. The Lord has passed through the heavens, and though unknown to the nation, who with wicked hands slew Him, He lives above. So long as He abides thus, Israel will remain without their inheritance. But He will come forth, the heavenly High Priest, and then Israel shall receive full forgiveness, and shall once more inherit every man his dwelling place. On that day, in millennial glory, shall the Name of the Lord and His presence be the centre, the true Shiloh, the Peace of the promised possession on earth.

The words "the Lord *also* spake unto Joshua, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge," occurring immediately after the statement "so they made an end of dividing the country," point to God's gracious provision for Israel. Having lost the land which Jehovah gave them, and being driven out of the possession because of their guilt, they are, nevertheless, most mercifully sustained by God, until the day shall come when they shall again enter upon their inheritance. Therefore, though Israel

understood it not, their cities of refuge, each one from the eminence on which it stood, and with the highways running towards its gates, proclaimed the grace of God to them in the dark and terrible day of their crime in slaying His Son.

While to the eye of man those days when Israel dwelt in Canaan are but a bygone scene of national glory, to the eye of faith the return of the nation to the promised land depends upon the coming forth of the High Priest who is now in heaven. Had the Jews repented when the Holy Ghost, through the apostle at Pentecost, testified of Christ's death and resurrection and ascension on high, the inheritance would have fallen to Israel, for we read, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, *that so there may come* (see R.V.) seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." (Acts iii. 19-21.) They did not repent, and the promised times of restitution have not yet come; but the sure promise remains, it is "impossible for God to lie" (Heb. vi. 18), and the word sworn to the fathers shall yet be made good.

In this our Christian era the priest is hidden within the veil, Jesus is in heaven, ministering there in the presence of God. A priest indeed of heavenly, not earthly, type, and occupied with the hourly needs of His people, leading them each one home to heaven; but none the less will He bring His scattered nation, Israel, into their promised possession, when the heavens,

which now conceal Him, shall open, and when He shall come forth. That day draws near. "Even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne." (Zech. vi. 13.) In His double glory of Priest and King He shall bring Israel into their inheritance, every tribe shall have its lot, the temple and the throne shall be exalted, and old and young shall rejoice in the Lord whose words can never fail. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." (Zech. viii. 4, 5.)

In the days ensuing upon the death of Christ, the Spirit of God, speaking through the apostle, said to Israel: "Ye killed the Prince of Life," and also, "Now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers" (Acts iii. 15 and 17); for, in His grace, God accepted that those who had been the murderers of Jesus had sinned through ignorance. Indeed, God speaks in a somewhat similar strain of Gentiles, saying of the wisdom of God, "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." (1 Cor. ii. 8.) The wilful, predetermined murder of the Lord, as the Sent One of God, would have been a sin beyond forgiveness.

The Lord Jesus is now both City of Refuge and Priest, and not for Jews only but also for Gentiles; our security and inheritance are both bound up with Him.

We "have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." (Heb. vi. 18, 19.) The solemn consideration that the guilt of man having shed the blood of Christ rests on the world should ever weigh on the Christian's mind, while the sinner, who repents of his sins, finds the City of Refuge day and night ready to receive him.

Jewish tradition declares that the highways leading to the cities of refuge were kept in constant repair; that at the cross-roads, posts having "Refuge! Refuge!" inscribed upon them, were erected, which pointed out the way; and that runners, who were learned in the law of God, were stationed to guide the fugitive to security. Most suggestive to the lovers of souls are these traditions, and a most happy combination do these runners present of the evangelist, whose feet should be swift to lead and help souls to Christ, and whose lips should be filled with the truths of God's holy word.

The blood of Christ has, in mercy, magnified the claims of divine justice, and the gates of salvation are flung wide open to receive the transgressor. God declares His name of love, and by His servants, His Levites, who expound His word, invites sinners to enter in and partake of His grace. Love now cries aloud from the throne of the majesty on high—the Lord Jesus in heaven is proclaimed as assuring the life of those who are of the guilty race that slew Him. And not only is security theirs who have fled to Christ for refuge, but being saved in hope—in hope of coming glory—a glorious inheritance is theirs in anticipation.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The Cities of the Levites.

JOSHUA xxi.

“He . . . gave gifts unto men, . . . and some . . . teachers.”—
EPI. iv. 8-11.

THE Levites had no lands nor lot in Canaan as had the other tribes ; and, upon the cities of refuge being provided by the Lord, they came to the high priest, Eleazar, and to Joshua at Shiloh, and laid claim to the cities and the suburbs, which Moses had commanded should be apportioned to them by the tribes out of their inheritance.

The lots for the families of Levi fell in such a way that the children of Aaron, the priest, obtained their cities out of Judah's portion, in which also Simeon possessed, and out of that of Benjamin. Thus the hand of Jehovah ordered that the families of the priests should be settled in the districts surrounding the royal city, Jerusalem. A design marks every detail of the possession of Israel's inheritance, and divine order and beauty are stamped upon the whole of the nation's portion.

The number of cities that fell to the Levites “within the possession of the children of Israel”—“forty and

eight cities," twelve, four times told, has also a divine purpose in it. The number twelve recurs frequently in God's ways with Israel, and signifies administration in His kingdom; the number four runs all through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and as a mark of completeness. Hence these cities, apportioned to the Levites and distributed over Israel's inheritance, indicate that everything was finally ordered in the land, and that God had provided for the complete administration of His word in the possession He had made Israel's.

To the Levites fell the solemn responsibility and high privilege of teaching Israel the law of the Lord. "They shall teach Jacob Thy judgments, and Israel Thy law." (Deut. xxxiii. 10.) In the day of blessing to Israel which is yet to come, the prophet declares of Levi, "They shall teach My people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to My judgments." (Ezek. xlv. 23, 24.) For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, and He will carry out His great purpose of promise to the fathers, and will yet establish His word in the Land of Canaan.

The Levites were set apart from the rest of Israel for the service of the sanctuary and the contemplation of God's word; and, as they went up in their courses to attend the worship of God and returned to the cities from their sacred office, the whole of Israel would be kept in mind of the Lord, whose cloud overshadowed the tabernacle at Shiloh.

Thus, in the final ordering of the possessions in the

promised land, Jehovah provided for the maintenance of the knowledge of His word amongst His people ; without this their prosperity must inevitably cease, for without obedience to the word of God their privileges would be forfeited.

At Ebal and Gerizim the Lord established Israel in the land, in obedience to the solemn words of His law ; on that day Israel formally entered into possession of their inheritance ; and now, the whole land being apportioned among them, the crowning act is the distribution amongst the nation of the Levites, to whom was entrusted the upholding of the word of God in Israel. The first and the last great acts, in connection with the possession of the land, are, therefore, connected with the law, the Levites being entrusted with teaching Israel the word of Jehovah. Israel's prosperity from first to last depended upon their obedience to that word. The responsible position of the Levites is most marked, and in like manner is that of the ministers of God, whom He has appointed to be the instructors of His people.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Rest.

JOSHUA xxi. 43-45.

“If Joshua had given them rest, then would he [David] not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.”—HEB. iv. 8, 9.

ALL Jehovah's promises were fulfilled, and the land was distributed amongst Israel, according to His word.

“And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which He sware to give unto their fathers.

“And they possessed it, and dwelt therein.

“And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that He sware unto their fathers.

“And there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand.

“There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.”

Jehovah had been unwearied in bringing Israel into the possession of the land promised to the fathers. He had now fulfilled His own sure word. He had come down into Egypt, the land of Israel's bonds; He had been afflicted there in their afflictions; He had ransomed

them from captivity, and, having given them the spirit of pilgrims, had guided them as a flock through the wilderness, where He fed them daily, went before them, and was their rearward; He had healed their wilderness backslidings, and forgiven their unbelief in His grace; He had brought them through the river into the promised land, fought for them, given them victory over all their enemies, and had made the promised inheritance their possession. All that Jehovah had given them to anticipate was fulfilled. Israel was at rest—rest in the midst of fulfilled promises, in the midst of possessed blessings.

In one sense Israel entered Canaan at rest—at rest from the judgment of Egypt, from the pursuit of the destroyer, and from the wilderness. All their hopes concerning deliverance from the place of bondage and Pharaoh, and of reaching the land of promise, were then fully realized. Thus they began their fight in Canaan as God's men of war, and in the power of His liberty; and, having waged Jehovah's wars for seven years, as it is generally understood—a perfect period—"the land rested." (Joshua xi. 23.) Conquest produced rest from warfare; but as this was obtained by conquest, it could only be sustained by incessant watchfulness, being lost to them should they fail to exterminate the enemy. The rest was not absolute.

But the rest mentioned in verse 44 of the chapter before us is complete, at least so far as Israel was concerned.

Every character of rest which Israel enjoyed resulted from divine faithfulness. That here described, being a fulfilment of promise, is one which, when entered, leads the devout heart to exclaim, Behold, what hath God

wrought ! It anticipates a day when, every foe of God's people being subdued, all the blessings which are promised them in Christ shall be realized.

What follows in the book of Joshua, morally considered, is hardly a development of the history of Israel. With rest we have reached the desired end. The remainder of the book is a warning to such as, having a promise given them of entering into rest, seem to come short of it (chap. xxii.), and an exhortation to those which have in spirit entered into rest, to abide in the power of it (chap. xxiii. and xxiv.).

The Christian, as the result of Christ's victory, enjoys through faith present rest over sin, the world, and Satan, even while warring with these foes. It is his portion, by faith, to know full deliverance from the judgment of the world through the precious blood of Christ, his passover ; to know that Christ, being risen from among the dead, has broken the power of death and Satan ; from both of which He has delivered His redeemed people. The Christian knows, too, that Christ is in the heavenly places, and that he is seated in Him there ; that he is God's freed man, and in the power of this liberty and rest, and, in his Lord's might, he fights against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. The Christian enjoys the peace of his Shiloh, worships the Father in spirit and in truth in the true tabernacle, where the glory-cloud ever abides. But while all these blessings are his to enjoy and to dwell in, yet there is a rest which he is anticipating, a rest which he has not at present entered, even the rest of God.

The Christian is a man of expectation ; he is saved in hope—in hope of coming glory. Did he not enjoy

complete peace with God, and rest for his conscience through the finished work of the Lord Jesus, he could not hope for the glory. His salvation is absolute, but the longings of the new nature render him a man of expectation. "Hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Rom. viii., 24, 25.)

Hope and possession are woven together in his soul. He is not yet transformed into the image of Christ, though he is now a child of God; what he shall be is not yet manifested, but he is blessed in Him with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places. He is not yet morally like the Lord, but by beholding His glory he is, day by day, changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) He is compassed about with infirmity, and with the whole groaning and travailing creation, groans within himself, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body (Rom. viii. 21-23); yet he has the Spirit of God within him, the earnest of the promised possession. (Eph. i. 13, 14.) Hope and security are both his, "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (1 Cor. xv. 49); "we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. iii. 20, 21), yet even now "all things" are ours. (1 Cor. iii. 21.) In the sympathies of Christ, the Christian anticipates the day of his Redeemer's glory, and longs to behold that glory, as the Lord prayed the Father (John xvii. 24); in the "patience of" Christ he awaits the day when the Lord's foes shall be made His footstool. (Rev. i. 9.)

It is further the Christian's privilege to look forward, desiring the honour of Jesus, to the time when Israel's twelve tribes shall own their now rejected Messiah, when north and south shall give up the people who are now nationally dead, when their land shall once more flow with milk and honey, and shine with God's favour, and when Israel shall sing to Jehovah "and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him;" when the Kingdom of God shall be established, and the name of Jesus be confessed by every tongue, and every knee bow to Him and own Him Lord, to the glory of God the Father. In a word, the Christian is expecting all that shall accrue to Christ's glory, which His precious death has purchased, and for which He Himself waits, for "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." (Isa. liii. 11.)

In order to enjoy rest in our present spiritual blessings ceaseless vigilance is necessary, for the foe is still active. But fightings without and fears within will cease before long; idols and their names will shortly come no more in remembrance. The strivings of sin and the buffetings of Satan have an end for God's people; it shall be said of all the saints, even of the weakest, "The Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand." The day will dawn, ushered in by the Morning Star shining in the sky; and then this world and the lusts thereof shall pass away; and it shall be proved that the word of the Lord endureth for ever. Then, resting in God's rest, heart shall respond to heart with joyful praise, "There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken . . . all is come to pass."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Return of the Forty Thousand Warriors.

JOSHUA xxii.

“Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”—GAL. vi. 7.

IN considering the story of the return of the forty thousand warriors belonging to the two and a half tribes, the Lord's first exhortation to Israel, “Arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them,” must be borne in mind. It must also be remembered that on “this side” Jordan were the twelve memorial stones of the passage of the river, the strength of Gilgal, the camp, the prostrate walls of Jericho, the stones whereon the law was written at Ebal, the tabernacle, and the cloud.

“Bring us not over Jordan” had been the settled determination of the two and a half tribes, whom God had so greatly enriched upon their way to the promised land. They preferred sitting down and enjoying their riches to pressing forward to the inheritance. Expediency rather than faith guided them. The cities of Gilead had greater attractions for them than the soldiers' tents over Jordan. Settling down, let it

assume what form it may, is a sorrowful thing. Faith inherits "yonder and forwards," in nearness to God.

"Bring us not over Jordan" had been the cry of these tribes; "we will not inherit with them"—i.e., with the mass of Israel, their determination; hence the sorrowful day came for the backward journey of their warriors. However much the zeal of the forty thousand, who for their brethren's sake fought on the Lord's side of Jordan, may be admired—and surely they had their reward—it cannot be denied that the two and a half tribes sent them "forwards" to fight the Lord's battles, in order to compromise matters. "We will pass over armed before the Lord into the land of Canaan, that the possession of our inheritance on this side of Jordan may be ours."

The Lord having now given rest to Israel, as He had promised, Joshua said to these warriors "Return ye." He commended their faithfulness and obedience, and earnestly enjoined upon them whole-heartedness for the Lord. He entreated them to love the Lord, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to cleave to Him, and to serve Him with all the heart and all the soul; and he blessed them, and sent them away. "Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren." There is a blessing for any child of God who follows the Lord with a true heart, even if he do so only for one day, and there is ever spoil for such to divide with those who stay at home and keep the stuff; but "Return ye" is a solemn sentence.

“Return ye” from the scene of hardship and of victory to the pastoral tent! “Return ye” from Canaan to Gilead! “Return ye” from the promised possession to the inheritance of your choice! Departure from any degree of zeal for God, or nearness to God, is grievous; and this the forty thousand discovered returning from the battlefields and forsaking Shiloh, the place of worship. In a sense, it may be, the Lord accepted them in the position which they had chosen (see end of ver. 9), for He acts towards His people according to His own standard of faithfulness, even when they are in a false position. “He remaineth faithful.”

As these men of war, who had fought and endured hardness with their brethren, journeyed to their inheritance, they came to Jordan, and there they made a halt and questioned among themselves. The sight of the river recalled grand memories of God’s ways for Israel. They had entered Canaan by the dry bed of the stream which they were about to ford on their homeward way; they had helped to erect the memorial in Gilgal of the passage of the river by all Israel. Were they then indeed going to leave the promised land? Were their own feet about to put the river between them and the twelve stones of Gilgal and the tabernacle of Shiloh? Their hearts smote them. In that crisis did faith suggest, or did compromise reason? They did not adopt the course which the nine and a half tribes afterwards proposed—“Pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the Lord, wherein the Lord’s tabernacle dwelleth”! No! “They built a great altar.”

Their *great* altar was not the Lord’s altar—it was a memorial, a remembrance merely. Its chief value con-

sisted in its evidencing that they who erected it had been once at Shiloh! Such a necessity demonstrated the untenableness of the position on the "other side of Jordan."

What a poor thing was their altar of Ed! It was not for worship; they did not mean that "burnt-offering, or meat-offering, or peace-offering," should ever be placed upon it. No sweet savour was to arise from it, nor were gladdened hearts to surround it. What then was this great altar for? "To see to!" To see to—to recall the brilliant past! To witness that, in days gone by, those who had built it were soldiers in Canaan and worshippers at Shiloh! Alas! how often the Christian builds his altar of Ed; altars of "witness," altars to see to are in many hearts and in many associations, where once there was real devotedness to Christ. "Great" altars are these. Great our hands like to build them, but the altar of the Lord is never said to be great. People talk of what they used to be, how they served God, how they enjoyed seasons of heartfelt worship, and by the sign of the past, would prove the soundness of their present condition. Traditions and memories, not the living energy of the present, possess such souls. No man on a field of battle builds his monument; monuments are built when the soldiers have returned home. The twelve stones at Gilgal were a monument to what God had wrought for Israel; the altar of the forty thousand was a monument to the memory of what they themselves had been; our conflict must not end until life be spent; let our daily life, not an altar to see, witness for us. In Canaan, across the Jordan, was the place God had ordained for Israel's home, there was Israel's place of

blessing. In Christ in the heavenly places, is our only true position as the soldiers of our Joshua; may our souls never return from that place of blessing to one of our own choice.

The deceitfulness of sin, and the treachery of our hearts harden the soul. There is no real prosperity save in nearness to God, and in living in the blessings wherewith He has blessed us in Christ. The spirit of expediency is utterly contrary to God; yet who has not listened to his heart bidding him choose some easy place, and to excuses for abiding where he ought not to be? We have to learn that we must go up to the position of faith, whatever it may be, which God sets before us, and to refuse the invitations of our own lusts, which bid us endeavour to bring God into our self-chosen land of sight. The Christian must ever be "on the alert"; the moment he turns his back upon faith's battlefield he fails, and is in danger of falling.

They could not have "the Lord's tabernacle," except by going over into "the land of the possession of the Lord"; but their affections, their wives and little ones, and their riches were on the other side Jordan, and thither they returned.

They reasoned thus—Perhaps in time to come the children of the nine and a half tribes may say, "What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel? For the Lord hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in the Lord: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord." Certainly Jordan was a border. It was plain to them that crossing it appeared like leaving the Lord, with His holy

tabernacle and its blessings, and that their doing so was fraught with danger; upon considering this danger, most unworthily did they place the burden of their children's forsaking the Lord upon those who remained near His tabernacle.

Their brethren had never suggested divisions among the Israel of Jehovah, nor that the Jordan was a separation between them, nor that their children should cease fearing the Lord; but so it is: the believer who leaves his more devoted companions for some worldly association invariably lays the blame of the consequences upon those who abide with God. Blaming godly people is a common salve for an uneasy conscience; finding fault with one's brother is a universal remedy for covering one's own shame.

When the tidings of the altar of Ed reached Israel, the whole congregation assembled itself at Shiloh, at the one altar of Jehovah. They beheld in the erection of a second altar nothing less than rebellion against the Lord of the twelve tribes. The zeal of Israel was stirred, and when the heart is zealous for God in the contemplation of the failings of others, it remembers with a chastened spirit its own sins; so "the iniquity of Peor," "the trespass of Achan," with all those bitter fruits, were present before them. Israel, moreover, judged themselves before attempting to judge the wrong-doers; they felt that the seeds of the very evils they mourned over in the two and a half tribes, and which they were assembled to root out, were among themselves. Such is the spirit in which the believer, when in communion with God, laments the desertion of

his fellow-soldier, and deals with evil. Judgment must begin at home, and who is guiltless? And where the sin is a controversy, as was this in the mind of Israel, between Jehovah and their brethren, great will be the contrition and brokenness of spirit in those who have grace given to them, to be zealous for God's glory. Any other spirit is but the zeal of mere nature.

The sword of human vengeance may be drawn in the name of holiness, and pharisees and scribes may stone the offender, and yet because of their own hardness of heart be more guilty than those they judge. But from Rome downwards the fire has been a common cure for disorder in the church.

The nine and a half tribes acknowledged the sin of the two and a half tribes as transgression involving *all* Israel. "Ye rebel to-day against the Lord . . . to-morrow He will be wrath with the whole congregation." How little do Christians realize the solemn truth of the sin of one affecting the prosperity of the whole (see ver. 20). There would be less indifference one to another, and less desire to heap up blame one on another were this truth realized. The Christian is not a mere unit, he is one with all saints; his behaviour affects others, and the behaviour of others affects him. The rebellion, the self-will, say, of a company of God's saints tells its painful tale in the displeasure of God falling upon His people. This argument of the nine and a half tribes was most powerful to the hearts of the two and a half tribes, as well as a most emphatic warning based upon the principles of the government of God.

The clean and the unclean (see ver. 19), regarding the land where they dwelt, were determined by the

presence of the Tabernacle among them ; not by human notions, or questions, but by the cloud of glory and the ark. Well might they invite their brethren to such a holy centre. Only where God is, can His people dwell in purity and peace. Were Christ Himself more truly the centre of His people, His holy presence would rebuke sin and chase away bitterness and pride.

Nothing proves the true godly spirit of the nine and a half tribes more forcibly than their patience in listening to the arguments of the forty thousand warriors, or rather of the two and a half tribes (chap. xxii., ver. 21). These were accepted by their brethren, and peace was maintained. Their words were good in the eyes of Israel, and they rejoiced that the Lord was among them, keeping them from open departure from Him, and saving them from the consuming hand of His judgment, and from the bitter necessity of fighting against their brethren. The act of the forty thousand looked as dark as Israel feared, but God, who knows the motives of our hearts, gave Israel grace to learn by patient enquiry what the motive of the act really was, and so saved the nation from destruction, a principle which, if observed by Christians in controversy, might often save them from division and bitterness, which is, to say the least, as keen if not as deadly as the edge of the sword.

After the lapse of some years the prosperity of Israel was changed for Bochim (weeping). (Judges ii. 1.) The sorrowful time of national declension came. Jehovah, filled with pity, raised up judges to deliver His erring people ; and at that time we read of a day of testing. (Judges, chap. v.) Where were the two and a half tribes

then? Did the great altar of sight inspire them to devote their lives to the cause of the promised land? "Gilead abode beyond Jordan," remained at home at ease. "For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings:" thoughts of heart—great resolutions were made by the men of war, but nothing was done! "Why abodest thou among the sheep-folds to hear the bleating of the flocks?" Because the piping of the shepherds was preferred to the trumpet of war? Hard, indeed, must be the necessity which rouses an ease-seeking believer into action. Daily nearness to Christ alone preserves the soul from spiritual declension. Zeal, riches, spoils, blessings of former days, having once trodden the land of the Lord's inheritance, will not avail.

In a time when many turn aside, thrice happy are they who inherit "forwards," and who endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ.

Later in Israel's history we find the two and a half tribes in captivity, and the land of Gilead lost beyond recovery. (1 Kings xxii.)

CHAPTER XXXV.

Joshua's Last Words.

JOSHUA xxiii.

"Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of."—2 TIM. iii. 14.

LIKE all last words addressed by the noblest of God's servants to those who have the battle on earth still to fight, Joshua's are tinged with sadness. The great warrior, who for some time past had been feeble in body, was "going the way of all the earth," and feeling this, he gathered Israel around him—elders, heads, judges, and officers—so that, once for all, he might pour out afresh in their ears his fervent words. As has been already recorded (chap. xiii.), the Lord had said to Joshua, "Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed"; the work was yet incomplete, and the leader's might was decaying. With lengths and breadths of Canaan still untrodden by the people, and himself about to leave them, he commended Israel to their ever-abiding Strength—to Jehovah, who is ever the same, and whose years do not fail. "I am old and stricken in age," said he, "and ye have seen all that the Lord your God hath done for you; for the Lord your God is He that hath

fought for you . . . the Lord your God, He shall expel . . . as the Lord your God hath promised unto you. . . . Cleave unto the Lord your God. . . . The Lord your God is He it is that fighteth for you." In like manner it was that the apostle Paul, in the prospect of his departure, commended the saints he loved to God, and to the word of His grace (Acts xx).

"I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain," said Joshua. "These nations" were the chief anxiety of his heart. The land needed cultivating which had belonged to those nations he had cut off; but, for Israel's very preservation, the nations that remained called for fresh determination in war. Either they must be expelled and driven out of sight, and their land possessed, or Israel would forfeit liberty, and maybe life, through them. The true warrior spirit burned in Joshua in his old age, even as in his days of strength. Old age turns usually rather to past victories than to victories to be won, but the zeal of his first energy still inflamed Joshua's soul. To inherit, Israel had, as at the first, to disinherit the Canaanite; to possess, they had still to drive out the nations. There was no middle course; go on they must in their first energy, or fail altogether. Though in possession in Canaan, they were precisely in the same position for success as at their first entrance into the land. And this he enforced upon them with all his zeal.

Because of this they were to be, as at the first, very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law, even as they had been exhorted when possessing nothing. Established though they were in the land, they were to have that courage which turns

not aside from the word of God to the right hand or to the left, even as they had been exhorted before the wars in Canaan commenced. How hard it is for the believer to lay hold of the fact that always and at all times, solely in obedience to God's word can he conquer! How difficult for him it is to practise daily unwavering dependence on God! And in no stage of his career is this more difficult than when he has attained a position, when, like Israel, he has reached to a great point of success. The young Christian soldier, with all to win before his soul, feels that God *must* be his strength, or that failure is inevitable; while he who has many victories to recount is in danger of saying with Samson, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself." Further, when a child of God begins his active Christian life, the world is the world to him, the dividing lines are clear and distinct in his soul; but, after his Christianity is acknowledged (as in our day it so often is), there is the great danger of allowing the amiability of the world to become a snare to him, and of his falling into an alliance with it.

The nations that remained among Israel (ver. 7), weary of constant opposition, had accepted the fact of conquest, and thus were more dangerous to Israel's prosperity than they had been in their days of open war. The smile of the world is more deadly than its frown. Its right hand, outstretched in fellowship, is more fatal to Christian prosperity than its right hand outstretched with the sword. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." (James iv. 4.) For Israel to "cleave unto the Lord (their) God," and also "to cleave unto these nations that remained" among them was

an impossibility. No new path of prosperity and success could open before them, for there was but the one for them, the only path of success for God's people—obedience to His word. It is a delusion and a snare to think the world has changed because Christianity is tolerated, or to suppose that the word of God is of different application to the Christian after years of hardship for Christ from what it was on that first day when the Lord called him to be a soldier. And in view of the present-day spirit of trifling with infidelity, and of feebleness in decision to obey the Scriptures, these last words of Joshua should be laid to heart.

The path of prosperity and that of destruction for Israel were laid down clearly—the old rugged path, trodden on their entrance into the land; the new and tempting one of ease and of alliance with the nations, now that the land was conquered. “If ye do in anywise go back,” by cleaving to the nations that remained, then Israel's case was desperate. “Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you.” Most terrible words, and most terribly fulfilled. Israel went back, abandoned the true place of separation to God from the heathen, made marriages with them, and worshipped their gods; then His strength forsook them, and Israel became the miserable slaves of the peoples they had once conquered. Alas! what backsliding does the Christian witness! How many have gone back from those truths of justification by faith

for which their forefathers willingly died, and thus find themselves the prey of the very superstitions their forefathers vanquished! The nations that remain lift up their heads, infidelity arises in giant-like strength, and binds "in affliction and iron" hundreds of souls. "We wrestle . . . against principalities, against powers, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places," says the Scripture. Incessant conflict, with all that is not of Christ, is our only safety. Alas! for such Christians, nominal or real, who make alliance with infidelity and superstition, or who neglect the plain precepts of the word of God!

The path of prosperity and that of destruction are, we say, laid down clearly. The good shall not fail; neither shall the evil. Israel knew in all their hearts, and in all their souls, that not one good thing the Lord had promised had failed; they were warned also that not one word of the Lord concerning evil would fall to the ground. Did they serve other gods, they would arouse Jehovah's anger, and perish "quickly from off the good land which He had given unto them."

It is true that in God's dealings with His individual children He will surely bring each one safe to His home above, but none the less is it true that what a man sows he shall reap. It is well to be silent as to individuals; but, in the histories of communities and of God's people at large, we see His dealings according to corporate responsibility. The evils, allowed in their midst, become at last scourges in their sides and thorns in their eyes, and the good things, which once they richly enjoyed, perish from among them. Alas! we see the very people, who once were so joyful in God, lamenting their lack of peace and prosperity!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Jehovah's Final Words by Joshua.

JOSHUA xxiv.

"I am the Lord, I change not."—MAL. iii. 6.

THE words spoken by Joshua at Shechem differ from those recorded in the last chapter, being a special message from Jehovah to the people. The nation—elders, heads, judges, officers—presented itself before God; and to this assembly, called together at Joshua's bidding, the last words which Jehovah uttered through that leader's lips were delivered.

In choosing Shechem for this solemn gathering of all Israel, God would remind His people of the beginning of His ways with them, and of their disposition of heart to Himself. To Shechem the nation had come at the commencement of the wars in Canaan; there, wives and little ones, warriors and old men, had all assembled; there, when the inhabitants of the land were in force about them, in the very midst of their enemies, the nation had reared their altar to the Lord God of Israel; and there, the Levites had read aloud the law of God, and all Israel had consented by responsive Amens to its requirements. In the narrow

valley between the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim, where Israel now again assembled, the plaister-covered stones, inscribed with the words of the law, stood as witnesses before their eyes, and the sound of the Amens of the first great assembly were still ringing in the ears of many.

. The thoughtful amongst the people would not merely recall Israel's first altar in Canaan, for at Shechem Jacob, their father, had built his altar, calling it El-elohe-Israel, connecting with God's great name the princely title his God had given him. The Lord's great name, and His favour to him, in that day, had aroused Jacob to purge his household, who there "gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem." (Gen. xxxiii. 18-20, and xxxv. 2-5.) Jacob built his altar in Shechem, and "the terror of God was upon the cities" which were about his tents, when he there buried the idols. In like manner the nation assembled first in Shechem, and the surrounding cities had held their peace; and now, at this their last great assembly in Joshua's day, they were bid "put away the strange gods" that were among them. The great Name of Jehovah, and His great acts of favour for Israel, were Joshua's argument to the people, for the purging of themselves. He made a covenant with them, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem, wrote the words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone of witness and set it up there under an oak. (Josh. xxiv. 25, 26.)

Shechem then, with its stones and its oak grove, was a sanctuary of hallowed memories and associations. The

recalling of their past by the Lord, in that familiar spot, forced upon the nation the consideration that Jehovah's ways never change, and the practical issue that obedience to His word is the paramount duty of His people, and that in this alone can prosperity be their portion. As the Lord required thoroughness from Jacob in the day when He had saved his household by the strength of His arm, so He now required thoroughness of the children of Israel, for whom His grace and His strength had been wonderfully exercised. They, like their father Jacob, had to cleanse themselves, and to put away their idols—that is, if they would prosper and possess their land.

These last words from Jehovah to Israel through the lips of Joshua demand, therefore, the most earnest attention. From first to last (v. 2-13) they recount Jehovah's sovereignty, power, and grace. His sovereignty in bringing their fathers out from idolatry; His power in delivering the people from their enemies; His grace in establishing them in their possessions. And, as we consider the sovereign favour, power, and grace of our God and Father, our response should be the purging ourselves from the evil thing which He hates.

"I have done this," is the burden of the words of the Lord to Israel. His people are blessed, solely because He will bless. The beginning of Israel's history was idolatry,—“they served other gods”; and when far off from God, He found them, even as He finds sinners to-day, afar from Him, dead in trespasses and sins. “I took,” the Lord continues, “Abraham” out of the far-off land of idolatry, “and led him throughout all the land of Canaan;” and God takes His

own out of their state of death in sin, and puts them in Christ in the heavenly places. For Abraham, as for God's saints now, there was no going back to "the other side of the flood," no return to the old state and home; he trod the land of promise; we are seated in Christ in the heavenly places. God's ways of grace are absolute, they know no change, no variableness.

The Lord further declares, "I gave unto Isaac, Jacob, and Esau. I gave unto Esau Mount Seir." He writes afresh upon the heart of His people, so wonderfully brought into and blessed in the land, His own absolute will of grace, and teaches them to say, "What hath God wrought?" for of Him as, well as "through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 36.)

Then comes a lesson with which the saints, generally, are made familiar, since it is one wrought out in their histories. Esau entered into his possession; but when Edom's armed men held their strongholds, "Jacob and his children went down into Egypt." There for centuries they possessed but God's promise, for as a nation they were buried in the bondage of Egypt. This is a familiar experience of God's children, who have to learn to trust in God's word, and to walk by faith, and to wait in patience. But God's arm fails not, in due time the deliverance came. "I sent Moses also and Aaron, . . . I brought your fathers out of Egypt." The Lord "sent," and the Lord "brought out." All was of Him.

"When He makes bare His arm, who shall withstand His might?" The chariots and the horsemen of Egypt, and the waters of the Red Sea, were as nothing to the Lord. He "brought the sea upon them, and

covered them." "Your eyes," said the Lord, "have seen what I have done in Egypt." Yes, cries the Christian, and our eye of faith has seen His power and His grace in delivering us from the present evil world, under the bondage of which we once sighed, almost despairing of freedom.

"Ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season," adds the Lord. And there they had seen His delivering arm, even as the Christian proves the strong arm of his God in bringing him on, stage by stage, through this wilderness world. "I brought you into the land of the Amorites," "I gave them into your hand," "I destroyed them from before you," the Lord further declares. And when weapons failed and the king hired the prophet to curse the nation, he adds, "I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand." Whether opposed by force or by cunning, whether by open enmity in the battlefield on earth, or by accusations presented on high, in all these things "we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

In Canaan, in the promised land, still the same great story is told. Did the men of Jericho or the forces of the seven nations, each greater and mightier than Israel, come against them; Jehovah says, "I delivered them into your hands." Did Israel take the aggressive? it was not by sword or bow they won the day, but because "I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you." In wars, defensive or offensive, in onslaughts of foes or onslaughts on foes, always, and alone, the Lord wrought the victory. Can the Christian fail to rejoice in like grace, yea, to make

his boast in his God, who is the God of all grace and of all might? Such a portion of the word as the latter part of the viii. of Romans recounts God's ways for us, as does this last chapter of the book of Joshua tell Jehovah's ways for Israel.

Wars having ceased, and the blessings of peace being enjoyed, the sacred soil of Canaan being their portion, still the story but unfolds the goodness of their God. "I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat." We, too, who are seated in the heavenly places in Christ, and are eating of the trees we planted not, and enjoying the fruits of His grace, rejoice to own that all is of God. Every spiritual blessing, and the appetite also for its enjoyment, is of Him.

Now, *therefore*, says Joshua, having recounted the wonderful ways of the Lord to and for His people. "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord." Departure from God and idolatry are sins that are a very part of man's fallen nature; and occupation of a position, though the most favoured, will not keep departure from God and idolatry out of the heart. It is vain to argue that no hidden household gods were in the houses of Israel, because the nation was in Canaan, and surrounding the tabernacle at Shiloh with its glory-cloud. The call to purge themselves was of God, who knew where the idols were hidden.

Then, as Jacob of old was aroused to vigorous action by God's grace and mercy, so Joshua declared, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Leader as he was, he could but appeal to others to follow his example and to be sincere, true, and thorough for God; for each man, and each house, must at all times deal separately with God. Joshua could but answer for himself and his own house, and this he did. Let us test ourselves, and try our ways by his words.

The people understood well that they were in Canaan solely by the will and work of Jehovah; He had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, He had wrought His great signs in their sight, He had preserved them in all the way they had gone in the wilderness, and He had driven out their enemies in Canaan, and therefore they said, "We will serve Jehovah, for He is our God." But Joshua, with an insight into their hearts, reminded them that it is no light thing to serve a holy and jealous God. Surely old memories and the history of the past added intensity to his warning! Self-confidence makes but a poor figure when arrayed before failures, and sin, and departure from God; but in spite of their history Israel replied "Nay; but we will serve the Lord."

Yet not one word did they utter as to the strange gods which they had been bidden put away from their midst. It is ever easier to say "We will serve the Lord" than it is to purge ourselves from idols; it is easier to resolve to serve the Lord, than to bury our household gods under some oak of Shechem. But God bids us first bury our idols, and then serve Him. Such is the order of His exhortation to us, as He says "Cease to do evil; learn to do well." (Isaiah i. 16, 17.)

Joshua told the people they were witnesses to their own promise as to serving the Lord, and they replied, "We are witnesses." Again he reminded them that first the idols must go, and that afterwards their hearts should be inclined to the Lord, saying, "Now, therefore, put away the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel."

Did they put away their idols? There is no answer, but Judges ii. 19 would lead to the conviction that they did not do so. "And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey."

The solemn service completed, Joshua set up a stone of memorial under an oak, to witness to the people what they had said and done; and he wrote the words of that day in the Book of the Law of God, so that the record might stand for ever before Him.

"So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance," and upon Israel devolved the responsibility of maintaining their position in that inheritance by obedience to God. We can only read and read again the solemn words of this last day of Joshua's appeal to Israel, and consider the fact that they evaded the point of his exhortation—the putting away of their idols. As we apply the exhortation to ourselves, we may open the book of Judges and trace there the result of disobedience.

"And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old." He was buried in the border of his inheritance in Mount Ephraim, where his

dust rests until Jesus, of whom he is so striking a type, shall raise him from the dead.

So long as Joshua's personal influence prevailed, Israel served the Lord, and, indeed, while his spirit still influenced the elders, who had been his companions, and who had known all the works of the Lord that He had done for Israel; but no longer, as the book of Judges demonstrates. And thus it is in all days and times, for men serve the Lord so long as the power of God in His servants turns their hearts to Himself, whether these be Judges or Kings—Moses, Joshua, or David. They serve the Lord while the light of His grace, through an inspired Paul, or an upraised Luther, shines upon them. The leader gone, the mass relapses into departure from the living God.

It is an utterly vain thing to dream that the letter of Christian truth will retain men's souls in God's presence. Even the letter of the Bible itself may become a dead letter in human hands. The doctrine of justification by faith may become but an article of a creed; the most sacred principles of the divine word may become but dead theories. The letter is retained and may be fought over, but the practice is gone—the living result in the soul is lacking. Outward formalism is characteristic of our day: therefore we do well to remember that "the word of God is quick"—"living," and that when truly believed, it produces living results.

It is impossible for saints to continue the heavenly course in the impetus of the faith of men who are now at rest with Christ. The true helpers of God's people are they who know practically in their own souls all

the works of the Lord, who live out what they believe, who have not only the principles or the doctrines of Scripture in their minds, but who have also the power of the Spirit of God filling their hearts.

With the closing of the book of Joshua, the Spirit of God mentions the death and burial of Eleazar, the high priest, in the borders of Ephraim, and the fulfilment of Joseph's faith in the burial of his bones in Shechem. His sepulchre fell within the "inheritance of the children of Joseph." His dust reposes not in that Egypt which saw his glory, but in God's promised land, though weakness and failure are written upon its holy fields. Man's short history on earth is traced to the grave; but in a little while Christ will reward the faith of all who put their trust in Him. He is coming; He will cause the dead to awake and to arise; and Joshua, Eleazar, Joseph, together with the weakest and the least believer of His saints, shall obtain their everlasting portion in resurrection glory.

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